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C R I T I C A L
D I S S E R T A T I O N S

ON THE
ORIGIN, ANTIQUITIES, LANGUAGE, GOVERN-
MENT, MANNERS, AND RELIGION,
OF THE
ANCIENT CALEDONIANS,
THEIR POSTERITY THE PICTS,
AND THE
BRITISH AND IRISH SCOTS.

By JOHN MACPHERSON, D. D.

Minister of SLATE, in the ISLE OF SKY.

L O N D O N :

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CRITICAL
DISSEMINATION

OF THE
ARTS AND MANUFACTURES
OF THE UNITED STATES

AND
THEIR
RELATION TO THE
ARTS AND MANUFACTURES

OF THE UNITED STATES

BY JOHN WASHINGTON, D.D.
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA



PHOTOGRAPHED

DEDICATION
TO THE HONOURABLE
CHARLES GREVILLE, Esq;

DEAR SIR,

MY Father, who was the author of the following Dissertations, would not, perhaps, have dedicated them to any man alive. He annexed, and with good reason, an idea of servility to addressees of this sort, and reckoned them the disgrace of literature. If I could not, from my soul, acquit myself of every selfish view, in presenting to you the posthumous works of a father I tenderly loved, you would not have heard from me in this public manner. You know, my dear friend, the sincerity of my affection for you: but even that affection should not induce me to dedi-

DEDICATION.

cate to you, had you already arrived at that eminence, in the state, which the abilities and shining talents of your early youth seem so largely to promise, lest what really is the voice of friendship and esteem, should be mistaken, by the world, for that of flattery and interested designs. I am on the eve of setting out for a very distant quarter of the world: without asking your permission, I leave you this public testimony of my regard for you, not to secure your future favour, but to stand as a small proof of that attachment, with which I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate Friend,

and most Obedient

Humble Servant,

JOHN MACPHERSON.

P R E F A C E.

THE following Dissertations are the production of the leisure hours of a clergyman in one of the remotest of the Scottish isles. Excluded, by the peculiar situation of the place of his residence, from the society of the learned, he indulged his singular passion for literature among a few good books. Though the natural bent of his genius turned towards the belles-lettres, he sometimes amused himself in disquisitions of a more serious nature. Being master of the Celtic, in all its branches, he took pleasure in tracing other languages to that general source of all the antient and modern tongues of Europe. From investigations of this kind many discoveries in the ancient history of nations arose. This naturally led to the examination of the mass of fiction, which almost every nation of Europe possesses for the history of their remotest ancestors. The more he looked into these legendary fabrics of antiquity, the less he found them capable of bearing the test of criticism. He therefore resolved to write some general dissertations on that subject, which, if they could not establish

blish a new and more rational system, would at least expose the absurdity of the old.

IT was not altogether from a partiality to his own country that Dr. Macpherson gave the first place to Scotland, in his disquisitions. Though the Scots have as just pretensions to a high antiquity as any nation in Europe, yet their origin is peculiarly involved in darkness. It was the misfortune of North Britain to have been almost totally destitute of letters, at a time when monkish learning, and those religious virtues which arose from ascetic austerities, greatly flourished in Ireland, and among the Saxons in England. This was the case in the seventh and eighth centuries, the æra in which the Hibernian systems of antiquity were formed. The fennachies and fileas of Ireland made then a property of the Scots of Britain, and, secure of not being contradicted by an illiterate, and I may say, an irreligious race of men, assumed to themselves the dignity of being the mother-nation. The partiality of Bede for his holy cotemporaries of Ireland is well known. The good man believed and retailed whatever fictions were dictated to him by the religious of a nation for whom he had the greatest regard for their orthodoxy.

THE almost continual wars and animosities which subsisted between the English and Scots for many ages naturally gave birth to violent national prejudices on both sides. The learned of England could not divest themselves of that antipathy to their Northern neighbours

bours which had seized their whole nation. Though at variance with the Irish in every other point, they agreed with them wonderfully well in extenuating the national antiquities of the Scots. Some of those gentlemen had the cruelty to extirpate the brave nation of antient Caledonians, lest the detested Scots of later times should derive any honour from the military reputation of a people who once possessed their country.

HAPPILY for the present times, those prejudices which blinded both nations have, in a great measure, subsided. National aversions are lost in the antiquity of those national injuries from which they first arose. Whatever may tend to do honour to either nation is heard with candor, if not with pleasure, by both. They are, in short, now so much blended with one another, that whatever throws lustre upon the one, ought to be reckoned an acquisition of reputation to the other.—If to throw a new and strong light on the antiquities of a nation, reflects any honour upon it, the Scots of the present age are much indebted to the industry and learning of Dr. Macpherson. He travelled back, it is true, into the regions of antiquity with more advantages than others have done, and therefore his success was proportionably greater. A few additional observations I am to make upon the general subject of the dissertations, arose, if they have any merit, from the discoveries he had made to my hand.

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SOME time before the total dereliction of Britain by the Romans, in the reign of Honorius, we find that the Caledonians were distinguished into two capital nations, the Deucaledones and Vecturiones. By these two branches I understand those, who, a short time thereafter, were known by the names of Picts and Scots. It was after the departure of the Romans, that the defenceless state of the degenerated provincials gave the Picts an opportunity of extending themselves to the Eastern counties to the South of the frith of Edinburgh. From the joint testimony of all writers who examined the subject, the Picts of the earliest ages possessed only the East and North-east coast of Scotland. From their situation, with respect to the Scots of Jar-ghaël, their country was naturally called by the latter *An Dua-chaëldoch*, a word compounded of *An Dua*, or *Tua*, North, and *Caëldoch*, Caledonian country. Some of the South-west Highlanders of the counties of Perth and Argyle distinguish to this day those of Ross, Sutherland and Caithness, by the name of *An Dua-ghaël*, and their country by the appellation of *An Dua-ghaëldoch*. This appears so obviously the etymon of *Deu-caledones*, that nothing but a total ignorance of the Galic language could permit antiquaries to have overlooked it.

THE etymon of *Vecturiones* is not so obvious. We learn from the most antient domestic records in Scotland, that a ridge of mountains, called Drum Albin, was the antient boundary of the Scottish territories towards the East. The author of the Dissertations has clearly demonstrated that Drum Albin is the chain of mountains

tains which runs from Lochlomond, near Dumbarton, to the frith of Taine, in the county of Ross. This Dorsum Britannia, as it is called by Adamnan, abbot of Iona, runs through the Western end of the districts of Athol and Badenoch. That part of this ridge of hills which extends between these districts, for a length of more than twenty miles, is called *Drum Uachtur*. This circumstance is well known to many, besides the natives of that country, as the military road through the Highlands passes that way. If we should suppose that *Uachtur*, which is still retained as the name of a part of Drum Albin, was once the general appellation of the whole, the etymon of *Vecturiones* is at once decyphered. *Uachtur*, though now taken perhaps in a more confined sense than formerly, literally signifies *the upper country*. *Uachturich* is a word of the same import with Highlanders; and if the harsh Celtic termination is softened into a Roman one, *Vecturiones* differs only in a changeable vowel from *Uachturich*.

WE have reason to believe, from the unfavourable climate, and sterile nature of the soil, in that part of Scotland which lies to the West of Drum Albin, that the ancestors of the Scots lived long in a very uncultivated state; as destitute of great national events as of letters to transmit them to posterity. Though the Scots of *Jar-ghaël* must, in the nature of things, have been very barbarous and unpolished, as far back as the latter end of the fourth century, yet it is to be hoped they were less so than the Attacotti,

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their neighbours, or rather a tribe of the Scots to the South of the Clyde. "In my youth," says the holy St. Jerome, "I saw in Gaul the Attacotti, a British people, feeding on human bodies. When they found in the woods flocks of sheep or hogs, or herds of cattle, they used to cut off the buttocks of the herdsmen, and the breasts of the women, looking upon those parts of the body as the greatest dainties *." I have such a veneration for whatever has fallen from the holy father, that I cannot entertain a doubt of the truth of this story, however incredible it might appear from an uninspired writer. The Irish nation, not content to deprive their posterity of Scotland of their antient bishops, abbots, presbyters and historians of any note, have also endeavoured to rob them of their barbarous and wild men. O'Connor, a learned dissertator on the history of Ireland, has, in the name of his nation, claimed a right to the Attacotti. I wish I could give them to the gentleman; for as the infamous label of St. Jerome is tacked to them, they can do little honour to the Scots of the present age.

It was in the fifth century that the incursions of the Scots, as a separate nation, into the Southern Britain, rendered them objects of attention to the writers of other countries. It does not appear that letters were any part of the booty which they carried home with them from the deserted Roman province. The seminary of monks established by

* Hieronym. con. Jovinian. lib. 2.

Columba, an Irishman, in the island of Iona, in the sixth age, seem to have been the only persons, within the territories of the Scots, that could record events. If they kept any registers of transactions, they were destroyed or lost, in the Norwegian conquest of the Hebrides by Harold Harfager, about the middle of the ninth century.

THE subversion of the Pictish kingdom is the first æra in which it can be supposed the Scots begun to have authentic records of their own. Soon after the conquest of Pictavia, the Saxons found means to extend their government to the frith of Edinburgh. The Picts and Saxons had alternately possessed, for some time before, the counties between the Forth and the Tweed. The most of the inhabitants of those counties were of the Saxon race, and no doubt, in a great measure, they retained the language of their ancestors. It was after the invasions of the Danes had totally broke the power of the Saxons, that the Scots extended themselves far to the South. The barbarity of those Northern rovers who incessantly harraßed England, as they themselves were heathens, drove certainly a number of pious Saxon ecclesiastics into Scotland. It was they that introduced the custom of recording events in monkish chronicles ; and upon the authority of Bede, they all adopted the system of the Hibernian extraction of the Scots nation.

THE Scots lament the destruction of their antient annals by Edward the First of England. Though

Edward's policy in this case was rude and barbarous, he did very little hurt to the genuine antiquities of the Scots. Many of the domestic transactions of the later ages were no doubt lost; but what related to the origin of the nation was Bede's tale re-told.—I shall endeavour, in some measure, to account for that learned writer's mistake.—A mistake I call it, though it is more than probable that the venerable monk of Girwy had some holy reasons for giving easy faith to the fennachies of Ireland.

THERE is reason to believe, with Dr. Macpherson, that the gospel was first preached in Britain by missionaries from the Lesser Asia. The great zeal of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who suffered martyrdom in the year 170, it is certain, induced him to send apostles to Gaul. His dispute with the see of Rome, about the very momentous affair of Easter, is well known. The zealous schismatic preferred the tradition of the Eastern church to the authority of St. Peter's chair.—An ardent desire of propagating his doctrine, occasioned his sending missionaries to the very extremity of the west, and of course to Britain. The opinion of the Eastern church concerning Easter, which prevailed among the Picts and Scots, is a corroborating argument on this head, The see of Rome found means to recover the Southern Britons to the Catholic opinion upon this important point; but the barbarians of the North were obstinately tenacious of the faith of their ancestors.

BEDE made many efforts to save the souls of his Northern neighbours, by endeavouring to bring them back to the true faith concerning Easter and the Tonsure. Naitan, the great monarch of the Picts, was at last overcome by the arguments of Ceolfrid, and, together with his nation, received into his religion these two articles, so necessary to salvation.—But the wicked and abandoned barbarians of Jar-ghael would not, it seems, be persuaded out of their error. From their obstinacy, no doubt, arose those prejudices against them, which are very conspicuous in the writings of the venerable Bede. Ireland at that time was deservedly called the *Country of Saints*. The Catholic faith prevailed there in all its original purity. The momentous articles of Easter and the Tonsure were received with that devotion which ought to attend the decisions of St. Peter's chair.—The venerable writer, so often mentioned, regarded the Irish with that partiality which good men have for the best of Christians, and gave great faith to their traditions and records.

BEDE was a very extraordinary person for the times in which he lived: pious and fervent, but calm in his zeal for religion, his writings throughout breathe the sentiments of humanity and devotion. He certainly had more knowledge than all his contemporaries joined together. But it appears to me, that he was neither critically inquisitive, or knew much of national antiquities. The good man was much better employed. Miracles, visions, dreams, martyrologies, Easter and
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the Tonfure, and, above all, St. Cuthbert and the fee of Rome, engaged his whole attention and diverted his mind from a study more amusing than important.

THE few scraps of antiquity which is contained in the first book of his ecclesiastical history, the venerable presbyter borrowed from Gildas, or from his own religious cotemporaries of Ireland. Before I proceed to Gildas, it may not be improper to give one instance of the great partiality of Bede to the Irish. Egfrid, King of Northumberland, had been, in the year 685, with the greatest part of his army, cut off by the Picts. This, says Bede, was a judgment from God, upon Egfrid and his subjects, for committing, the year before this fatal event, unheard of barbarities and ravages among the Hibernians, *a nation very harmless and innocent, and of a most friendly disposition towards the English.*

BEDE, however, must be blamed for his servile copying after Gildas, a writer not worthy of such attention. Gildas was one of the most passionate, peevish, and querulous of mankind. He not only was immoderately angry with the Scots * and Picts, who perhaps deserved very ill at his hands, but even his friends

* *Exin Britannia*, so he calls that part of the island which had been subject to the Romans, *duabus gentibus transmarinis vehementer sævis, Scottorum a Circio, Pictorum ab aquilone, calcabilis multos supet, gemitque per annos.* Gild. cap. 15. Bede explains, that Gildas gave the epithet of *transmarini* to the Picts and Scots, because they came from beyond the firths of Forth and Clyde. Bed. Hist. Eccles. lib. 1. cap. 12.
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the Britons, and, above all, he was enraged against the Saxons. From an expression in this author, some English * and many Irish antiquaries, to their great joy, thought they found an unanswerable proof that the Scots came originally from Ireland; and that in no earlier period than the sixth century. Gildas, speaking of the Scots and Picts, says, *Revertuntur ergo impudentes grassatores Hiberni domus; post non multum temporis reversuri*

THE epithet *impudentes* applied to *Hiberni* is not sufficient to establish the justness of this reading, though it might have some weight with men of wit. Bede was far from entertaining such an unfavourable opinion of the inhabitants of the *holy isle*. In an edition of Gildas, given to the public by Dr. Gale, the passage under consideration, is read in a more grammatical way, and less to the discredit of Ireland: *revertuntur ergo impudentes grassatores Hibernas domus*; so that Gildas meant no more than that the Scots returned home for the winter.

To justify this reading, it is to be observed, that the ancient Scots and their posterity gave the name of *winter houses*, the same exactly with the *Hibernas domus* of Gildas, to those more comfortable habitations to which they retreated when the warmer season of the year was over. In the summer they lived in the mountains and forests with their cattle, and to enjoy the pleasure and advantage of hunting. The Arabian Bedowins, the ancient Nomades, and Scythians, and

* Lhoyd and Stillingfleet,

the present Tartars, give into the same practice. The Bedowins, in particular, gave the appellation of *winter houses* to the habitations to which they retreated from the autumnal rains. Bede, a Saxon, was perhaps a stranger to this characteristical practice of the Scots, and not knowing what sense to make of Gildas's *Hibernas domus*, he altered the old reading. This opinion seems decisive, as he has retained the word *domus*, instead of the more proper word *domum*.

THE times in which Bede lived, were the golden age of Ireland. That kind of learning which then subsisted in the world, flourished much in that country. No enemies invaded it from abroad, and there was an unusual tranquillity at home. National prosperity is the source of national pride. Averse to have themselves thought descended from the Scots of Albany, who were far from being a powerful nation at that time, they began to search out for themselves, ancestors of a more dignified character. It is probable that the schismatic disposition of the Scots, about Easter and the Tonfure, had its weight in inducing the Irish to investigate their origin among a less perverse people.

THAT the Irish systems of antiquity were formed after the holy scriptures were known in that country, is beyond all doubt. All their fictions on that head are ingrafted upon names in the old testament. This subject is discussed at large, in the Dissertations now given to the public. I only mention it now to ascertain
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that the fable of the Hibernian extraction of the Scots of Albany was formed at the same time. The present identity of language and the similarity of customs and manners which prevailed among the Albanian and Hibernian Scots of ancient times, made it evident that they were originally the same people; for it became necessary to be very particular in the time and manner of their separation. The Irish fabricators of antiquities furnished Bede with that account he gave of the first settlement of the Scots in Jarghaël. If the British Scots had any national traditions of their own, which contradicted the *holy antiquaries* of Ireland, Bede, from a pious aversion to heretics, totally rejected them.

FROM what I have said, it appears, that the Scots have been, hitherto, unfortunate in the writers of their ancient history of their country. There has been great expence of erudition on the subject, both by foreign and domestic antiquaries. But the grand desideratum, in the disquisitions of those learned men, was a thorough knowledge of the old Caledonian language, which goes now under the name of the Galic tongue. Dr. Macpherson happily joined a critical knowledge, in that language, to his great learning in other respects. Something, therefore, more satisfactory ought to be expected from him than from those who have gone before him, and were not possessed of the same advantages.

BEFORE the Doctor had thoroughly examined his subject, he paid great deference to the opinion of

Tacitus, concerning the Germanic extraction of the Caledonians. The colour of hair and size of body, which distinguished them from the Britons of the South, were not conclusive arguments. These circumstances might depend more upon food and the peculiar nature of the soil and climate, than upon a different origin. The manifest difference in those dialects of the Celtic, which the Scots of the mountains and the Welsh speak to this day, seems more to argue their remote separation from one another. Their living as separate states, from the earliest times, could not have effectuated such a change: otherwise we cannot account for the identity of the Irish and Galic tongues, especially as the nations who speak those languages were, in no period of antiquity that can be assigned, subject to the same government.

THIS was one of the arguments that must have influenced the judgment of the author of the *Dissertations* in his first view of the subject. But this difference of language is easily accounted for. The little progress that navigation must have made in the North of Europe when Britain was first peopled, is a convincing argument, that the first migrations into this island, was from the nearest continent, which was the Belgic division of Gaul. These migrations certainly happened in the earliest stage of society. The subsistence of a colony of savages arises entirely from hunting: it therefore may be supposed that the Gauls found first their way to the Northern extremity of Britain, in pursuit of their game. In proportion as the original colony

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advanced

advanced Northward, other emigrants from Gaul trod on their footsteps. Thus for a course of ages Gaul poured into Britain a succession of colonies. The manners and language of the Gauls, in the mean time, suffered material changes at home. The arts of civil life gradually arose among them, and naturally introduced new ideas and new words into their language. It is to this advancing civilization of Gaul that we must ascribe the difference between the Northern and Southern Britons. The latter imported with them the changed manners, and adulterated, though improved, language of the more modern Gauls: the former tenaciously retained the unpolished customs and original language of their ancestors.

It would be as presumptuous, as it would be idle, to hope for the warm attention of the public to disquisitions of this kind. There are, however, some who, could they be culled out of the mass of mankind, have more enlarged ideas; some that are as impartial with respect to times, as they are with regard to countries and individuals. For these, and these only, the author of the *Dissertations* wrote. Disregarding the inattention of the many, could he but secure the approbation of the judicious few.

THESE would be the sentiments of the author, could he speak for himself: but, I am sorry to say, he is now insensible of praise or reproof. His death prevented his putting the last hand to this work. His

son, to whose care he left it, with a diffidence which ought to be natural to a very young man, chose rather to give his father's dissertations to the world as they stood, than to attempt any amendments, which perhaps might injure the memory of a parent he tenderly loved.

THE most of the nations of the modern Europe look back, with a blush, upon the strange fabrics of fiction they possess for their ancient history. They consider them as, at once, the monuments of the puerile credulity and folly of their ancestors. The Scots of this age saw with unconcern, if not with pleasure, forty of their ancient list of Kings expunged at once by Innes. This furious regicide, endeavoured to make amends to his countrymen, by giving them forty great Pictish monarchs for the long list of the petty Princes of Jarghaël, of whom he deprived them. The offer was rejected with that scorn it deserved; and the monarchs of Pictavia, whose existence depended upon the same, or even worse, if possible, authority, than that upon which the fiction of the first forty Scottish Kings was built, sunk away into their original non-entity.

IRELAND, tenacious as it has been of its ancient annals, begins to regard less the indigested fictions of her fennachies. Men of sense see the impossibility of transmitting events, through a series of ages, without the assistance of letters. They could not possibly assign an earlier æra for the introduction of letters than the apostleship

apostleship of St. Patric, and consequently, with Ware, they depended very little upon the accounts handed down concerning ages prior to the reign of Leogaire.

IN this untoward situation of the Irish antiquities, stepped forth O Connor to support the falling fabric. The zeal of this gentleman can only be equalled by his dogmatism. He has crowded the bottoms of his pages with the authorities of O Flaherty, Keating, and Buchanan, who had as few lights to guide them through antiquity, as a writer of the present time can be supposed to possess. The two first are only remarkable for their confused manner of compiling the indigested fables of bards and fileas; and the latter has scarcely any thing to recommend him but the elegance of his diction.

IN vain has Mr. O Connor endeavoured to establish an aboriginal knowledge of letters in Ireland. Innes had previously destroyed the credit of that system, and Dr. Macpherson has thrown it down for ever. From an additional dissertation published lately by Mr. O Connor, he seems to have been extremely gauled by some observations made by the translator of the works of Ossian on the ancient history and poems of Ireland. If a judgment can be formed from O Connor's intemperate rage, he feels very sore on that subject. His personal abuse of Mr. Macpherson seems to have proceeded from a very irascible disposition, or was intended to draw an answer from that gentleman, which might

might give importance to his own work. In this, it is to be feared, he will not succeed. The translator of the Galic poems is not much in the humour of doing an honour of that kind to adversaries who use low scurrility in the place of argument and dispassionate disquisition.



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DISSERTATION I.

The remote Antiquities of Nations either entirely
fabulous, or full of Uncertainty.

IN an age so accurate as the present, it affords
matter of some curiosity to observe those
marvellous fabrics of fiction, which bards
and antiquaries have erected as monuments
of the antiquity and illustrious origin of their nations.

LIVY has observed, that this credulous vanity of
ancient times merits our indulgence rather than cen-
sure. The degree in which this indulgence is be-
stowed, and the readiness with which belief is given,
depend on the various opinions, and different situa-
tions of mankind.

IN rude times, before the love of property takes
such absolute dominion of the heart, that all its ro-
mantic and generous views are excluded, the most

exaggerated tales, which reflect honour on the antiquity and illustrious descent of a nation, are attended to with rapture, and regarded as genuine history.

HOWEVER absurd the credulity and romance of antiquity may appear to us, it is both ungenerous and unfair to turn them to severe ridicule, without first attending to our own weaknesses: on a comparison of both, it may be difficult to determine who is the greatest object of contempt; the brave Barbarian, intoxicated with the bloody achievements, and ideal antiquity of his nation, or the civilized sceptic, refined into a disbelief of every truth, and equally removed from the partialities and superior virtues of the heart.

NATIONAL pride, an attachment to the marvellous, and easiness of assent, are the strong characteristics of mankind in their illiterate state. Hence it is, that, in their earlier periods, almost all the nations of the earth have ardently vied with each other, in the invention and belief of the most pompous and incredible tales, with regard to their origin and antiquity. A short survey of the antiquities of the most considerable nations of antient and later times, will establish the truth of this observation.

To begin with the Romans, a people whom national dignity and superiority have deservedly placed at the head of mankind.—Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, and what is more surprising, Salust, Livy, Dionysius Halicarnassus,

Halicarnassus, and almost all the succeeding historians, hold forth with one voice that the Romans were descended from Æneas : but the connection between that people and the Phrygian demi-god was no more than a perfect chimera. Homer's authority, together with the convincing arguments of a writer of great erudition *, have set this matter in the clearest light. Homer gives us a prediction of Neptune, in which we are plainly told, that as Priam's whole family were hated by Jove, Æneas himself and his latest posterity should reign over the Trojans †. “ This testimony of Neptune, says Mr. Pope, ought to be considered as an authentic act, the fidelity and verity of which cannot be questioned.”——Notwithstanding the prophecy of the earth-shaking God, and in direct opposition to probability and true history, the Roman poets made their court to princes, senators, and a powerful nation, by drawing out their Phrygian descent in all the beautiful colours of their art. Even those writers, in whom it was unpardonable to give a hearing to the most plausible romance, could not but patronize a tale, which, as historians, they should have despised ; but which, as Romans, they fondly believed.

If we go from Italy into Greece, we shall find that the learned and polite nations of that country, had a considerable share of the same vanity. According to the earliest accounts of time with them, their great

* See Bochart's Letter to Segrois. † Hom. Iliad. xx. ver. 306.

Princes and heroes were sons or grandsons of some one divinity or other. An original sonoble, became at length too estimable a blessing to remain the property of a few. It was fit that whole communities should partake of its benefits; therefore the Arcadians gave scope to their ambition, and seriously asserted that their predecessors were older than Jupiter, or what it seems they thought still more honourable, older than the moon herself. The Athenians seeing no good reason why any part of creation should take precedence of them in point of antiquity, affirmed that their progenitors were co-eval with the sun. These two nations were the *Aborigines* of Greece, and the latter assumed the name of *Autochthones*, a name which strongly characterizes their pride and ignorance.

ON shifting the scene to the other divisions of the old world; the same ambitious folly, and the same anility of belief present themselves to our view.

EGYPT was reputed the mother of wisdom, and the kingdom of science and knowledge: but whatever degree of wisdom and learning the Egyptians had, they had also weakness enough to entertain the most extravagant notions concerning their own antiquity. They carried up the age of their empire to an immense height, and reckoned it their peculiar honour and felicity to have been governed by gods, for ages immemorial. These gods, through time, became indolent, and so cloyed with power, that they thought proper to resign the administration of Egyptian affairs into

into the hands of mortal kings. The mortality of kings was supplied by the regularity and perpetuity of succession. Accordingly, we are told that between the commencement of their government and the reign of the last priest of Vulcan who sat on the Egyptian throne, a series of no less than three hundred and forty-one generations had passed away. This period of *mortal monarchs* was so intimately known to the literati of Egypt, that they spoke with confidence of every trivial occurrence that happened, and could ascertain the exact duration of every particular reign. The course of things had very happily adapted this last branch of the history to their remembrance; for it was demonstrable that the number of their monarchs corresponded precisely with the number of generations in which they reigned. A circumstance of this surprising uniformity, though so opposite to the common inequalities of the natural course of reigns, must have afforded the highest gratification to the puerile and superstitious fancy of an Egyptian.

HERODOTUS relates this curious history very circumstantially, and seems to have been no less convinced of its verity than he was impressed with its awfulness and grandeur. The priests of Memphis gave him the strongest assurances that, agreeable to this faithful and exact calculation, the Egyptian empire had lasted eleven thousand three hundred and forty years; and how was it possible for a historian of his character to disbelieve a relation, however miraculous, which was solemnly attested by such unexceptionable men. The
infallible

infallible servants of Jupiter had conducted him into a large hall, where he saw with his own eyes the statues of all the Vulcanian high priests, who had been enumerated to him. Every one of these sacred personages was introduced to him in the very order in which they had filled the chair; and, what is a little remarkable, every one of them was the son of his immediate predecessor in the pontificate.

THESE were the sentiments which the Egyptians entertained and professed concerning their remote antiquities. The extravagance of this passion, instead of subsiding through a series of ages, was constantly rapidly increasing, until the unfortunate reign of *Psammetichus*. That wise monarch, and his equally wise subjects, found themselves under a necessity of acknowledging, that the Phrygians had existed before all other nations, and, of consequence, had a right to take place of them. Herodotus relates this story in all its striking circumstances. The profound gravity with which he carries on the relation, and his serious appeal to the priests of Vulcan at Memphis, serve only to establish the consistency of this historian's character*.

TROGUS POMPEIUS, another famous historian, informs us, that the Scythians were thoroughly satisfied that they themselves had much juster pretensions to antiquity than either the Egyptians or Phrygians. The

* In Euterpe, c. 2.

philosophical arguments with which these barbarians supported their claim to so inestimable a dignity, appear to have had considerable influence over the faith of Trogus; and to do them justice, they were neither less convincing nor more frivolous than those on which *Psammetichus* and *Herodotus* had relied so much, in the dispute against the Phrygians *.

HOWEVER ridiculous the Egyptian and Phrygian systems of antiquities may appear, it must be allowed that none of them was more pregnant with absurdity than that of the Babylonians. *Berosus*, a celebrated Chaldæan priest, saw the propriety of putting the antiquity of his own nation on a sure and respectable footing. Accordingly, he applied himself to accurate and unwearied enquiry. The result of his labours was suitable to his most sanguine expectations; for he found that the Babylonians had made astronomical observations for a hundred and seventy thousand years before Alexander the Great made himself master of Asia. Of consequence, the Chaldæan nation must have existed for a space of time equal at least to that number of years; and what reasonable person could think of resisting the power of such a demonstration †?

It may not be improper to return now into Europe, and inquire how far the Celtic nations were blinded by the pleasing delusions of fable, and overpowered

* See Justin's Abridg. of Trog. Pomp. † Diod. Sicul. lib. ii.

with national prepossession. Those *Celtes*, of whom the most considerable nations of modern Europe are sprung, were originally so unconnected with the other parts of the world in which the use of letters prevailed, that their history, and in a manner their being, is later in proportion. It was only after their intermixture with the polished part of mankind, that their manners became settled, and their notions of antiquity distinct. Formerly they, like all men in a barbarous state, associated in detached tribes, and wandered over the common field as chance or choice directed. In such uncultivated and uncertain situations, a tale might amuse for a season, and the bard might occasionally sing; but the varieties of a migrating life could never allow the one to form into a tradition, nor permit the other to take any lasting hold of the memory. It is even a considerable time after a nation is formed that they think of looking back into antiquity by determinate steps. Ages and centuries are never the measures of time for the barbarian. He may be of opinion that his tribe is as old as any other, or may have originally descended from the sun †, or sprung spontaneously out of the ground, like the wood in which he pursues his game †; but without the aid of records, he can never trace back the origin of his distant predecessor, nor, were he in the humour of fiction, can he have any idea of framing a legendary one. On these accounts it is fruitless, and indeed superfluous, to search after the

† Charlevoix's Hist. of Indians. † Tacit. de Mor. Germ. cap. 1.

ideas or systems which the old Celtic nations formed with regard to their remote origin and history.

THESE natural obstructions to the researches of a barbarous people, after a splendid origin, did not at all discourage the nations of Europe. Spain, in particular, claimed to herself an extraordinary proportion of antiquity and genealogical honour. Strabo informs us, that the *Turdetians*, a nation of that country, could produce written monuments to support their claim, together with many celebrated poems and laws couched in verse, all of six thousand years standing. Our author observes, that these *Turdetians* were the most learned people in Spain; and we may very safely add, that they were beyond comparison the most antient people on earth, if Strabo's account of them be just: but that judicious writer acknowledges that the high antiquity of the *Turdetians*, and the genuineness of their records, rest entirely on the credit of their own testimony. It is a pity that these historical records, poems, and versified laws, should, after so long and successful a struggle with time, have in the end perished so prematurely, that not the smallest vestige of them could be discovered for these fifteen hundred years past.

THOUGH the Turdetonian archives have sunk in oblivion, time out of mind, yet the antiquities of Spain have been preserved in the works of authors truly antient, and have been published from these by a new *Berosus*. This faithful and most enlightened

historian found, by what he thought unquestionable evidence, that Jubal, the son of Japhet, and grandson of Noah, ought to be placed at the head of the Spanish royal line. He also asserts, that the right of this grandson of the patriarch, to the empire of Celtiberia, was founded on a donation of his grandfather, when he divided the world among his posterity.

It is idle to take any further notice of the many curious anecdotes which this historian, if he deserves that name, has extracted from fictitious records. But one cannot help being surprized how *Mariana*, one of the best historians of modern times, should have given into the absurdity of this ill informed and credulous author. The very first sentence of Mariana's history acquaints us, that Jubal was undoubtedly the person who introduced its first inhabitants into Spain. In the next sentence we are told, that all men of great learning and extensive enquiry, were of this opinion. He proceeds then to inform us, that Jubal; after having settled many colonies, and built populous cities, applied himself to the arts of government, and ruled over his extensive empire with great moderation and justice*.

FRANCIO, an imaginary Trojan prince, the son of the celebrated Hector, was once thought the founder of the French empire. An origin derived from so illustrious a source, could not fail to elevate an airy and fantastic people into the utmost intemperance of national pride.

* Mariana, Lib. 1.

But the French of later times seem little inclined to believe their *Phrygian* pedigree, nor are they so injudicious as to avail themselves of a passage in *Ammianus Marcellinus*, which might favour a pretension of this kind.

THE old Germans had bards established among them as far back as our authentic accounts of them reach. These bards, upon the authority of rhimes, venerable on account of their antiquity, affirmed, that they had the honour of being descended from a God. The name of that God was *Tuisco*; and so universal was the reverence paid to his memory, that every distinct nation of Germany adored him as their progenitor*.

LONG after letters and christianity had been introduced among the Germans, the same genealogical enthusiasm remained, though under a different form. No sooner had the deformities of the old system begun to appear, than the Saxons, Frieslanders, and Brunswickers, had the good fortune to discover that they were originally sprung from three renowned generals who served under Alexander the Great. It was thought absolutely inconsistent with probability, that the Prussians, so celebrated for bravery, should be the offspring of Celtic or Teutonic barbarians; accordingly an able antiquary rescued their reputation, by tracing them up to Prussias, king of Bythynia.

BUT of all the inhabitants of the North of Europe, the Danes were certainly the most romantic in their

* Tacitus.

pretensions to a remote origin and authentic records. Denmark was first inhabited by giants, says the eloquent Saxo Grammaticus. These giants were of matchless strength of body and vigour of mind. There were local demonstrations of the one, and traditional proofs of the other. *Dan* was the father of the Danish nations, and *Argul*, his brother, gave being to the English. These two great personages flourished an innumerable series of ages before the birth of Christ.

IF any one should ask, how the history of *Dan*, and of his immediate posterity were preserved, *Saxo* will satisfy his curiosity on that head. Denmark, according to him, produced a succession of excellent bards; whose business as well as amusement it was to record the actions of its kings and heroes, in all the sublimity of heroic composition: but as the productions of bards, however happy, may be destroyed or effaced by time, our author assures us, that the works of the Danish poets were liable to no such inconvenience, as they were engraved upon solid rocks and obelisks of the most durable nature. He even affirms, that he himself extracted those numerous historical rhimes, which crowd his work, from those permanent monuments of antiquity.

A LEARNED archbishop has traced the kings of Sweden all the way up to Magog, a person whose close connection with Noah fitted him highly for so eminent a station.

THE English were once enthusiastically fond of an ideal predecessor, and of an imaginary superiority derived from him. Brutus, the son of Silvius, the grandson of Ascanius, and great grandson of Æneas, was, to their great happiness, reputed the parent and founder of their nation. Brutus, happily for England, had the misfortune to kill his father; so that he found it necessary to leave Italy, and make his way into Gaul. There he performed many signal exploits; but did not think it convenient to pursue his fortune long in that country, as he was directed by the oracle of Diana to visit this island. Here he met with a monstrous race of giants, who gave him a very hostile reception: but their enormous strength of body, and the greatness of their numbers, served only as a field for Brutus to display his great military talents; for though a few battles were at first fought with various success, yet in the end Brutus not only overcame, but exterminated this gigantic race. After acting so long in a military and victorious capacity, Brutus resigned himself to the less laborious, but equally important occupation of a ruler and sovereign. The greatness of his abilities was then no less displayed in the arts of peace than in his former conduct in the field. He reigned long over the extensive empire of Britain, and at length closed a glorious administration, by dividing his territories between his three sons. These were *Locrinus*, *Camber*, and *Albanactus*. England devolved on *Locrinus*, being his eldest son; Wales was the patrimony of *Camber*; and Scotland fell to the share of *Albanactus*.

EVEN this tale had the good fortune to please an once credulous people. The English of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries embraced it with an enthusiasm peculiar to the romantic spirit of those times. Edward the first claimed a superiority over Scotland, on account of his more direct connection with Brutus. Accordingly, in the heat of those disputes which ensued on the death of Alexander the third of Scotland, Edward's agents urged strenuously before the Pope, that in consequence of the division which Brutus made of his dominions, Scotland was from the beginning, and of consequence should remain, a fief of England.

THE story of Brutus was far from wanting learned authority to support its credit. Geoffrey of Monmouth gave it all the aid which profound erudition and the warmest zeal could bestow. He affirms, that he found it fully demonstrated, by the joint testimony of old British annals : and it cannot be denied but an essential part of the story is found in Nennius, who wrote his *Eulogium Britannie* in the ninth century, about three hundred years before Geoffrey's time.

SELDEN has made some attempts to defend the tale of Brutus ; and Cambden owns ingenuously that he himself had frequently strained his invention to the utmost, in order to justify the most suspicious parts, and reconcile the contradictions of this story : after all, he could not persuade himself to believe it ; and it may be justly presumed, that all the English anti-

quaries of the present and of succeeding times will explode it for ever.

It is now high time to examine the pretensions which the Scots have to a remote antiquity: and after the foolish appearance which the ancient legends of the greatest nations of the world have made, it cannot, without a miracle, be expected, that they alone should be well informed of their genuine origin, or free of national credulity. They had no doubt an equal claim with other nations to a renowned ancestry, and as remote an origin. A mountainous country, like Scotland, bids indeed the fairest for inhabitants of great antiquity. A plain and fertile country is always subject to the inroads of their neighbours, and therefore often change their masters. The sterility of rocks, forests, and deserts, are far from being inviting to an enemy; at the same time that their inaccessibleness enables the natives easily to repel invasions.—The Scots therefore had no cause to yield, in point of antiquity, to any other nation. If tradition had failed in handing down the particular æra and manner of their first settlement, they were ingenious to invent, and partial enough to give credit to a noble and fictitious origin. Accordingly, the procurators sent by the states of Scotland, to plead their cause against King Edward, before the court of Rome, contended strenuously, that the Scots were descended from *Scota*, the daughter of Pharaoh King of Egypt.—That this *Scota* came into Scotland, together with her son *Erc*, whom she had by *Gathelus*. That
Argadia,

Argadia, or rather *Jar-ghaël* *, derived its name from the progeny of that son and father. In fine, That the old name of *Albania* was changed into that of *Scotia*, as soon as the Scots were settled in that island; and that the Scots did ever since that period retain their name and independence, while the Britons of the southern division changed their name and masters frequently. This is in substance the genealogical account of their nation, which the states of Scotland transmitted by their agents to Pope *Boniface* the eighth, in the end of the thirteenth age.

ALMOST all the records and historical monuments of the Scots history have been destroyed through the barbarous policy of Edward Ist of England of the Norman race, and the intemperate zeal of the Reformers. A few detached pieces, which have escaped those revolutions, fatal to the antiquities of the nation, have been preserved by the industrious Father Innes †. They throw little light on the genuine antiquities of Scotland, and serve only to reconcile us more to the destruction of those annals of which they are thought to be a part. The principal thing in which they agree, is, that Fergus, the son of *Erc*, was the first King of Scotland. One of these pieces, called the Chronicle, in rhyme, says, that the Scots came

* *Jar-ghaël* is that division of the Western Highlands which is partly comprehended within the county of Argyle. It plainly signifies the Western Caledonians, in contradistinction to the Picts or Caledonians who possessed the East coast of Scotland. *Jar*, West—*Gaël* or *Caël*, *Celts*.

† See his Appendix to his Critical Essay on the Scottish Antiquities.

from Egypt into Spain, in the time of Moses; that of him sprung *Milo* King of Spain, whose son *Simon Bree* settled in Ireland.—That some of the posterity of this Simon transmigrated from Ireland into Ergadia, about 443 years before Christ; and that the Scots lived there, in a most uncultivated state, till Fergus, the son of Erc, brought thither the *fatal marble chair* from Ireland, and begun his glorious reign. Another of those pieces says, that the Scots came into Ireland, from Scythia, in the fourth age of the world; that they and the Picts had one common origin; and that those two nations were descended from the Albanians.*

THE Irish, if we believe their antiquaries, are not inferior either to the Egyptians or Turdetonians, in the preservation of the most antient and minute events in their country, or in their claim to remote antiquity. The antient history of Ireland is indeed so characteristical of the romantic extravagance of dark ages, and at the same time so connected with our subject, that the pretended antiquities of that nation must be indulged with a separate discussion.

AFTER the survey which we have already made, it must be fairly acknowledged, that the very remote history of all nations is totally disfigured with fable, and gives but little encouragement to distant inquiry. At the same time, it is to be regretted, how much of

* Critical Essay, p. 774.

the early history and antiquities of nations are lost, and how indistinctly society is seen in its rudest form. The transactions of mankind, in the first ages of society, rise from the affections of the heart; of consequence, a knowledge of them would be highly interesting, and afford amusement, and even instruction, in these polished times.

THOUGH no nation in Europe has excelled the British in other branches of literature, yet we must acknowledge their deficiency in writing of history. Our antient historians, from the unfavourable times in which they lived, were ignorant, and full of prejudice. The few men of abilities who wrote of late years, hastening to those great events which crowd the latter part of our annals, have left our antient history in the same obscurity in which they found it: looking with too much contempt on the origin of societies, they have either, without examination, adopted the traditional tales of their predecessors, or altogether exploded them, without any disquisition. A writer of the greatest merit, who has lately favoured the world with an interesting part of the Scots history, has likewise fallen into this error. He, with great gravity, begins his work with the migration of the Scots from Ireland: a fiction in itself improbable, however venerable on account of its antiquity.

It were much to be wished, a writer of his abilities, both for elegance of diction and strength of
 4 judg-

judgment, had not been an absolute stranger to the original language of his country; which would at least have prevented him from giving his authority to so idle a romance. The discussion of this popular error, which I am to give in the sequel of these dissertations, will justify these strictures on so eminent a historian as Dr. Robertson.

DISSERTATION II.

General Observations on the first Migrations of Asiatic Colonies into Europe.—The Gauls the Progenitors of the ancient British.—Of the Caledonians.—The Etymon of their Name.

IT was the opinion of the ancient poets and philosophers, that mankind and other animals sprung, like vegetables, out of the earth. Absurd as a fiction of this kind may now appear, it was believed by writers, who, on other occasions, displayed an uncommon strength of understanding. Tacitus supposes that the first inhabitants of Britain * and Germany † were produced in this extraordinary way. The total ignorance of their own origin, which prevailed among them in the time of this celebrated historian, made him draw a conclusion, which requires no other refutation than exposing it to public view.

BE this as it will, we learn, from the concurrent testimony of sacred and profane history, that Asia was the first division of the world that was peopled: of course all the national migrations that have come to

* Tacit. in Vita Agric. c. 11.

† De Mor. Germ. c. 1.

our knowledge move progressively from East to West. The northern parts of Europe, which of old went under the general name of Scandinavia, appear to me to have been as soon at least possessed by an Asiatic colony, as ancient Gaul, Italy, or Spain. Man, in a state of nature, was not capable to transport himself even across the narrow firth of the Hellespont. But as hunting has always been found to be the amusement, as well as support of barbarous life, we may conclude, that the first colonies of Scandinavia came gradually from the northern Asia in pursuit of their game. In the winter season, when the frost renders all the great rivers and swamps of Russia and Poland passable, those migrations might easily have happened.

NAVIGATION, though a very early invention, is long before it arrives at that degree of maturity which is necessary to give confidence to mankind to cross an arm of the sea. We may therefore conclude that Scandinavia was in some measure peopled before those countries which border upon the Mediterranean. It is from this consideration we must deduce the great difference we find between the Celtes of Gaul and the northern nations. Their manners and their language were in some manner similar, and makes room for a conjecture that they were originally descended from the same stock, though perhaps separate nations before they left Asia.

THE first race of Asiatics, in the progress of their migrations, were naturally separated by the Caspian Sea; some directing their course to Tartary, and others to Asia Minor. Of the Tartar race are descended the Scandinavians,

dinavians, under which name I comprehend the Danes, Swedes, western Ruffians, and Poles: the Celts of Gaul, Italy, and Spain, were a colony from the lesser Asia. The Celts extending themselves to the North, and the Scandinavians moving towards the South, after, perhaps, a series of ages, met on the confines of the modern Germany. The great distance of time from their separation in Asia, effected such a change in their manners, language and customs, that their common origin was totally obliterated from their memory, and continual wars and animosities subsisted between them. This naturally occasioned encroachments upon one another's territories, and that unavoidable mixture of people, which generally happens upon the frontiers of warlike nations, whose boundaries are often changed by the vicissitudes of war. From this circumstance proceeded the mixed manners and language, and perhaps the very name of the Germans *.

THE Celtes of Gaul were, without doubt, the progenitors of the first inhabitants of Britain. The vicinity of the two countries, in a case of this kind, is a conclusive argument. At this distance it is impossible to form any conjecture concerning the time in which the first migration of the Gauls into Britain happened. It is equally impossible to find out by what national appellation they went at their first settlement in this island. Whether the first inhabitants of the northern division of Britain were descended of the *Gaulish* colony of the South, or came from the North of Ger-

* *Allemans*, the ancient name of the Germans, obviously signifies a composition of different nations.

many, will fall to be discussed hereafter. I shall in this dissertation confine myself to the Caledonians as we find them in Britain, when their wars with the Romans made them objects of attention to the writers of Rome.

THE Caledonians were the most powerful, and, to speak with Galgacus, the most noble of all the nations that were of old settled in that division of Britain, which has since obtained the name of Scotland. By the joint consent of all the writers who give us any account of them, the Caledonians were reckoned the *Aborigines* of that country. Lucan * is the first writer that mentions them, but he had but a very imperfect idea of what part of Britain they possessed. He places them in the neighbourhood of the *Rutupian shore*, near Sandwich, or some other part of the coast of Kent. Even Pliny and Florus, whose intelligence concerning the seats of the Caledonians, ought to be more precise, than any poetical description given by Lucan, are far from being distinct on that head. Tacitus is the first of the historians of Rome that has assigned its proper place to Caledonia.

FROM the united testimonies of Tacitus †, Dio and Solinus ‡, we find, that the ancient Caledonia comprehended all that country to the north of the firths of Forth and Clyde. The *Mæatæ* §, whom some have

* Luc. Phar. l. iii. v. 67, 68. † Tacit. Vita Agric. c. 25.

‡ Solin. Polyph. c. 35.

§ *Mæatæ* is probably derived from two Galic words *Moi*, plain, and *aitich*, inhabitants; or as an ingenious friend of mine observed, from *mæan*, middle, and *aitich*, inhabitants; alluding to their situation between the conquered Britons and the independant Caledonians.

reckoned

reckoned a branch of the Caledonians, possessed all that tract of land which intervened between Adrian's wall and the frontiers of Caledonia, properly so called. It is not now my business to enter into what has come to our knowledge of the military history of the Caledonians. The Roman writers who have given us an account of them are in the hands of every body. I shall confine myself entirely to some critical remarks on the etymon of their name, as this dissertation is only intended to clear the ground for an hypothesis, which I flatter myself shall be established in the sequel of this work.

ANTIQUARIES are much divided about the etymology of Caledonia. Buchanan *, though a native of the Highlands, and of course conversant with the Galic language, is not happy in his conjectures on that subject. *Calden*, according to him, signifies a hazel tree. From thence proceeds the famous Caledonian forest, and the name of Caledonia. It is amazing to observe how a man of his learning, and great abilities, could give in to such a puerile conceit. But had Buchanan considered properly his native tongue, he would have found that *Caultin*, and not *Calden*, signifies a hazel tree; and that there is no such a word as *Calden* to be met with in the Galic language.

DR. LLOYD, bishop of St. Asaph, derives Caledonia from *Cilydion*, a British word, signifying *borderers*. The Caledonians, says that learned prelate, bordered on

* Buch. Hist. l. 2.

the Roman province in Britain, and therefore were with great propriety called *borderers*. The bishop did not consider that the boundaries of the province were often changed. If we suppose the wall constructed by Adrian, marked out the limits of the Roman empire in Britain, then the *Brigantes*, *Ottadini* and *Mæatae*, had a much better title to the name of *borderers* than the Caledonians. If the wall built by Antoninus Pius is to be looked upon as the boundary of the province, then it naturally should follow, that the Caledonians did not acquire the name of *Cilydion*, or *borderers*, till after the construction of that wall. But the passage mentioned from Lucan proves, that the name of Caledonians made some noise in the world as early as the reign of Nero. Thus the bishop's etymon of Caledonia falls to the ground.

CAMDEN, one of the best antiquaries that the world ever produced, has endeavoured to give the etymon of Caledonia. *Kaled*, observes that learned writer, is a British word, which signifies *hard*. In the plural number it makes *Kaledion*, and hence proceeds *Caledonii*, that is, a people, *hardy*, *rough*, *uncivilized*, as northern nations generally are: a people fierce in their temper, from the extreme coldness of their climate; a people bold, forward, and intrepid, from the abundance of their blood.

THE severity of this observation on the national character of the Caledonians does not at all favour the etymon produced by Camden. If the name of *Kaledion* was first framed by the Britons of the south,

it may be justly questioned, whether they themselves, before the reign of Nero, were less *hard, rough, and uncivilized*, than their neighbours of the north, or of course less intitled to that name. But as every thing that falls from so justly celebrated a writer, makes a great impresson: I confess this etymon had such weight with me, that I long considered the word *Kaled* as the root of *Caledonii*. This led me further into the subject; and I submit to the world, with great deference to the great merit of Camden, the additional observations I have made.

KALÉD †, in both the antient British and Galic languages, signifies *hard*. In both these languages *in*, or *yn*, signifies *a country*. From the monosyllable *in* comes the diminutive *innis*, which in the Welsh and Galic is of the same import with the English word *island*. By joining *Kaled* and *in* together, we have *Caledin*, *a rough and mountainous country*; which is exactly the signification of *Alba**, the only name by which the

† See Bullet's *Memoires sur la lang. Celt.* under the word *Kaled*.

* That this is the proper signification of *Alba*, shall be shewn in the sequel of these dissertations. If the etymon given here of *Caledonia* should appear a just one, I shall make no difficulty in supposing that the *Calydonia* of Greece is derived from the same Celtic source. *Ætolia*, of which the Grecian *Calydonia* was a part, was a very mountainous country. Three mountains in particular there, *Taphiosus*, *Chalcis*, and *Corax*, were, according to Strabo, immensely high. The face of the country was very rugged, and the inhabitants hardy. Homer gives the characteristical epithet of *rocky* to *Calydon*, the capital of that country. Hom. *Iliad*. xi. ver. 640.

Highlanders distinguish Scotland to this day.—This etymon of Caledonia is at least plausible: but I must confess that the derivation given by Mr. Macpherson, the translator of the poems of Ossian, is more simple and natural.

THE Highlanders, as he justly observes, call themselves *Caël*. That division of Scotland which they possess they universally call *Caëldoch*, that is to say, the country of the *Caël* or *Celtes*. The Romans, by a transposition of the letter *l*, in *Caël*, and changing the harsh *ch* of *doch*, into an harmonious termination, formed the name of *Caledonia*. From this etymon arises an observation, of which we shall make use in the sequel of these dissertations.

DURING the invasions of the Romans, we find many other tribes, besides the *Caledonians* and *Mæatæ*, in the north of Britain; though probably they were no more than subdivisions of those two illustrious nations. Every one of those tribes were governed by an independent chief, or petty King. In Cæsar's time there were no less than four such chieftains in Kent, and each of them vested with regal authority. The political government of Caledonia was, in Domitian's reign, much the same with that of Kent during Cæsar's proconsulship.

WHEN the tribes of North Britain were attacked by the Romans, they entered into associations, that by uniting their strength, they might be the more able

to repel the common enemy. The particular name of that tribe, which either its superior power or military reputation placed at the head of the association, was the general name given by the Romans to all the confederates.

HENCE it is, that the *Mæatae* and Caledonians have ingrossed all the glory which belonged in common, though in an inferior degree, to all the other nations settled of old in North Britain. It was for the same reason that the name of *Mæatae* was entirely forgotten by foreign writers after the third century, and that of the Caledonians themselves but seldom mentioned after the fourth.

THE *Mæatae*, we have already observed, were one of those tribes who were settled to the south of the Clyde and the Forth. Ptolemy places the *Gadeni*, *Salgoveæ*, *Novantes*, and *Damnii*, in the same division of the country *. To the north of the Firths the same writer assigns their respective places to the *Caledonii*, *Epidii*, *Carini*, *Cantæ*, *Logæ*, and several other small tribes. Without insisting upon the probability that Ptolemy, an Egyptian, was not so minutely acquainted with the internal state of Britain as he pretends, at a time when the north of Europe was so little known to men of letters, we shall take it for granted, that all those nations he mentions were of the same original stock; and to avoid confusion, I

* Ptolem. lib. iii. c. 10.

shall, for the future, comprehend them all under the general name of Caledonians.

TACITUS divides the inhabitants of Britain into three classes ; the Caledonians, *Silures*, and those who inhabited the coast next to Gaul. He endeavours to trace those three nations to others on the continent, from whom he supposed they had derived their origin. The Caledonians he concludes, from the size of their bodies, and the colour of their hair, were of a Germanic extraction. Though it must be confessed that this conclusion is far from being decisive, from those two circumstances ; yet there are many collateral arguments which corroborate the opinion of that great historian. These, in some future dissertation, I may throw together, and leave the whole to the judgment of the public.

* * * This the author has done, in a dissertation, intitled, A parallel between the Caledonians and Ancient Germans, which is printed in this work.

DISSERTATION III.

Of the Picts.—That they were the Posterity of the
Caledonians.

VIRGIL's observation, that Italy often changed its name, is equally applicable to the rest of the kingdoms of Europe. That migrating disposition which possessed mankind in their barbarous state, occasioned, of old, such revolutions and intermixture of nations, that no appellation of any country was permanent.

BRITAINS, Caledonians, Mæatæ, Barbarians, and unconquered nations, are the names constantly given to the old inhabitants of North Britain, by Tacitus, Herodian, Dio, Spartian, Vopiscus, and other antient writers. The successors of these Britains, Caledonians, Mæats, and Barbarians, are called Picts, Scots, and Attacots, by some Roman writers of the fourth century. The cause of this change of names is, at this distance of time, little understood. Some English antiquaries affirm, that the old Caledonians were gradually exhausted in their wars with the Romans: that
some

some foreign colonies occupied their almost depopulated country: and that these foreigners either assumed or received the name of Picts. If curiosity should lead us to inquire from what quarter of the world these foreigners came; Bishop Stillingfleet has already affirmed, that the *Chersonesus Cimbrica*, a part of the modern Denmark, was their original country. He has also told us, that they settled first in Caledonia about the middle, or rather near the end of the third century.

THE question now is, whether this system is well founded, or whether we have better reason to believe that the Picts were the real offspring of the old Caledonians?

BEFORE this question can be fairly resolved, it will be proper to review the history of North Britain, from the death of Severus to the reign of Constantius. Several eminent antiquaries say, that it was under the reign of this emperor the Picts, Scots, and Attacots, began to make any considerable figure in this island.

Soon after the death of Severus, Antoninus Caracalla, his son, entered into a negotiation with the Barbarians of Britain, and gave them peace upon receiving hostages. This, in substance, is the account given by Herodian, of the manner in which Antoninus put a period to the Caledonian war. He has not explained the conditions of the peace. But as he says, that Severus, oppressed with age, cares, and an inveterate distemper,

distemper, had not been able to finish the war, and that his son, on whom the command of the army employed in North Britain had devolved, was little solicitous about the further prosecution or success of that war, it may be taken for granted, that the Caledonians were far from being exhausted when the peace was ratified.

IF we chuse to follow Dio's account of this war, we can hardly believe that the Caledonians sustained any considerable losses either before or after the death of Severus. If it be true that Severus deprived the Caledonians or their allies of their arms, and some portion of their territories, it is no less so, that the Caledonians and Mæats took up arms with one accord, upon receiving the news of the emperor's indisposition.

AFTER his death, Caracalla and Geta, his two sons, agreed in giving them peace upon very honourable and advantageous terms. This peace was ignominious to the empire in every article, excepting that relating to the hostages. For the two brothers resigned to the Barbarians all the advantages for which Severus and his predecessors had been so eagerly contending.

THE affairs of North Britain were totally neglected for a long time after Antoninus and Geta had quitted this island. The empire was torn in pieces by tyrants; and those who assumed the purple wanted leisure, inclination, or spirit, to make any new attempts on Caledonia.

Caledonia. The ablest men among them, Aurelian, Probus, and Diocletian, were too much employed elsewhere to execute such a design.

It is true, Carausius usurped the sovereignty of South Britain in that period: but it may be doubted whether he repaired the old Roman wall which stood between Clyde and the Forth; whether he fortified that wall with seven castles; whether he built that ancient edifice vulgarly called Arthur's oven, on the bank of the river Carron; or whether he erected a triumphal arch in the neighbourhood of that river, to perpetuate the memory of a signal victory which he had obtained over the Barbarians of North Britain. All these notable actions, together with the etymon given of Carron *, rest entirely on the authority of the fabulous Nennius; or upon the credit of his equally fabulous interpolator.

AFTER Carausius and Allectus, his successor in the usurpation, were slain, Constantius Chlorus, on whom Britain, together with the other Western provinces of the empire, had devolved, upon the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian, came into this island. This

* To suppose that Carron comes from Carausius is a very puerile conceit, though probably the only foundation of the curious anecdotes related by Nennius. The name of that river is a Galic one; which signifies a *winding river*. Accordingly we find several Carrons in North Britain; and one of them in the Western district of Rosshire, where Carausius confessedly never was.

Emperor formed a resolution of subduing the Caledonians, though he had other affairs of much greater importance to mind; but he died at York before he had time to carry his design into execution.

CONSTANTINE, who commonly goes under the name of Great, succeeded his father Constantius in the imperial dignity, and assumed the purple in Britain. But being, as it is natural to suppose, impatient to take possession of the capital, it is certain that he lost no time to acquire either new territories or laurels in Caledonia. The idle panegyrics of Ecclesiastics are the only authorities we have for supposing that he did either the one or the other in the beginning of his reign; nor did he ever, after putting a period to the civil war, return into Britain.

THE province of Britain fell, upon the death of Chlorus, to his son Constantine; and it is certain that the Caledonians were neither exhausted nor even molested by Roman legions under his short reign. His ambition inspired him with very different views. He made war on his brother Constans, at no great distance from the seat of the Roman empire, and was slain by his generals in battle near Aquileia*. This event subjected Britain to Constans; and it is allowed that he, accompanied by his brother Constantius, came in person to visit his new territories. But it does not appear that either of the brothers did penetrate as far as Caledonia. Two declamatory writers of that

* Eutrop. l. x.

age, who speak of this expedition in a very high tone *, seem to resolve the glory of it into the victory obtained by Constans and Constantius over the British ocean, during the winter season: a feat which, according to the opinion of one of these authors, was never performed before, nor ever to be performed afterwards.

CONSTANS was murdered in Spain, after a reign of seventeen years, by the party of Magnentius, who assumed the purple in Gaul, and drew over Britain to his side. It is not probable that ever this usurper had any disputes with the Caledonians. Constantius made war upon him without any intermission, during the whole course of his short reign, and brought him at last, after the loss of several battles, to the necessity of laying violent hands upon himself. Upon the death of Magnentius, Britain, together with all the other rebellious provinces of the empire, submitted to Constantius.

FROM this review of the history of Rome, in so far as it is connected with that of North Britain, from the death of Severus to Constantius, several questions will naturally result. In what Emperor's reign were the Caledonians so exhausted or degenerated to such a degree as to yield up their country, their freedom, and their reputation, to a colony, or even an army of Scandinavian rovers? In what period

* Livan. in Bas. Julius Firm. de error. profan. &c.

of time happened those devastations by which they were exhausted? Were they either annihilated or reduced to a state of incurable debility by Severus, or by his sons Caracalla and Geta? Did Macrinus, Heliogabalus, Alexander, or Maximinus, did any of the succeeding Emperors or thirty tyrants overcome them?

As therefore there is no ground for supposing that the Caledonians were annihilated or even much weakened by the legions, generals and Emperors of Rome, it is far from being credible that an army sufficient to overcome or extirpate them, could be transported from the Cimbrica Chersonesus, in the third century. Every body knows what little progress navigation had made at that time in the North of Europe. A few long boats, which were the only craft the Scandinavians could be supposed to have, were very inadequate for the purpose of carrying armies across the German ocean.

THE improbability of a great migration of this kind, at that period, is strengthened by the silence of ancient writers of credit on that head. It is therefore too precipitate in any modern antiquary, to give his authority to a fiction, so contrary to all the ideas we can form of the state of the North of Europe, in those times. The opinion of Camden, the most learned as well as most candid of the antiquaries of England, is decisive on this subject. After mature consideration of this new system of Humphrey Lhud, he was far from believing

believing that the Picts were an upstart nation, or a colony of foreigners first settled in Britain in the course of the third century. Camden's opinion was, that the Caledonians, so far from being extirpated by the Romans, or any other enemy, had multiplied to such a degree, that their own country became too narrow for them: and it is to this cause he attributes, chiefly, the frequent incursions they made into the Roman province *.

* Camden's Brit.

DISSERTATION IV.

Of the Pictish Monarchy.

THE countries, of which the greatest monarchies in Europe are now composed, were antiently divided into several small dynasties and petty republics. Men, whose superior strength of body or mind raised them, on signal occasions, to the head of the community, were first dignified with the pompous title of royalty. Their authority and power were originally, however, confined within limits extremely circumscribed. Absolute government is never established in the first stages of society. It is after a series of ages that the passions of the human mind are sufficiently mellowed down to submit calmly to the dictates of despotism, and to wait with patience the tedious operations of an extensive government.

MANKIND, in their uncultivated state, though averse to that tyranny which sometimes attends monarchy, were incapable of any other form of government. A republican system is too philosophical for the savage to comprehend it properly. I might have said, though

though the observation is far from being favourable to the dignity of human nature, that it is too noble for even civilized communities long to preserve it among them. I shall not therefore hesitate to pronounce, that monarchy is the most natural government for mankind.—We accordingly learn, from the most antient accounts we have of every nation, in their earliest state, that monarchy was universally established among them.

WE find, from Homer, that antient Greece was divided into an immense number of petty dynasties. The same kind of government prevailed of old, in Gaul, Italy, Spain, and Germany. Britain, at the time of Cæsar's invasion, was governed by a number of little independent Princes; and from the accounts given of Caledonia by Tacitus, Dio, and Ptolemy, we may conclude with certainty, that it was composed of many small states, unconnected with one another, and without any one bond of union, excepting that which arose from their common danger.

GALGACUS and Argetecoxus are the only Caledonian Princes expressly mentioned in history. The first was no more than the Generalissimo of a powerful confederacy, though superior in birth and renown to the other Caledonian Princes who fought against Agricola. The second was little more than a petty King or Chieftain*; for the spirited reply made by his

* Xiphil. in Severo.

wife to the Empress Julia seems to be the only thing that has preserved his memory from oblivion.

To ascertain that all the inhabitants or territories of Caledonia were governed by one monarch, in any one period of time before the beginning of the ninth century, is extremely difficult, if not absolutely impossible. And if it were true that the Picts were a great people before the Scots were settled in Britain, it is far from being certain that those Picts were governed by general monarchs in any early period.

ADAMNAN, abbot of Iona, is the first that mentions any Pictish King, and the oldest author after him is Bede. We are told by these two writers, that St. Columba converted Brudius, King of the Picts, to the Christian faith; and we learn further from Bede, that Brudius was a most powerful prince, and that Columba came into Britain in the year of the vulgar æra five hundred and sixty-five. If there were any Pictish Kings before that period, Pictish Kings possessed of extensive dominions, or monarchs of Caledonia, we have no genuine record to ascertain their very names.

BUT the loss arising from the silence of antient writers is perhaps more than fully compensated by the accounts given of the Pictish Kings, and the antiquity of the Pictish monarchy, by the *Sennachies* or historians of Ireland. We are told by them, that the Pictish monarchy began at the same time with that

of their own country, that is to say, thirteen, or at least eleven whole centuries before the birth of Christ *. They assure us further, that the Picts had a succession of seventy Kings, from *Cathluam*, who was cotemporary with *Heremon* the first Irish monarch, to Constantine, who reigned about the end of the eighth century.

THOUGH the Scots historians took care not to do too much honour to the Pictish nation, yet it seems they found themselves under a necessity of granting that the Picts were settled early in Britain; and that they had a succession of fifty-eight, or at least fifty-two Kings †.

THE Pictish nation was totally subdued by the Scots in the ninth century, and their name has been swallowed up by that of the conquerors with whom they were incorporated. Did any considerable body of that people exist now, it is more than probable that some of them would lay claim to the honour of remote antiquity, and boast of a very long series of monarchs, like the Scots, Irish, and every other European nation. But though the Picts have been extinct for many ages back, they have found in Father Innes, the author of the Critical Essay, not only a most zealous friend, but as able an advocate to plead their cause, as perhaps any one their nation could have produced.

* Keat. Gen. Hist. of Ireland, p. 120, &c. Flaherty Ogyg. p. 190.

† See Innes's Crit. Ess. p. 108.

It is well known that Innes has been at great pains, though born a Scotsman, to annihilate no less than forty Scottish Kings. He was sensible that many of the abettors of the high antiquities of Scotland would be displeased with the wanton attempt he made to rob them of their antient monarchs, to whom they had, at least, an old prescriptive right. But he found out a method of making ample amends for this injury: instead of forty or thirty-nine ideal monarchs, and these no more than petty Kings, had they actually existed, he has given his country an indisputable right to forty powerful sovereigns of the truly antient Pictish line; and he has been at no little trouble to demonstrate, that the Scots of modern times are as much interested in these Pictish monarchs, as they could be in the antient Kings of their own nation, who are placed between the first and second Fergus.

INNES could not possibly believe that the antiquaries of Scotland were so blind as to be caught in a snare so very visible, or idle enough to be put off with a compliment so vain and illusory. That writer could not have imagined, without a manifest self-contradiction, that the very names of so many crowned heads, from *Cathluan*, the founder of the Pictish monarchy, to *Drest*, in whose time the gospel was preached by St. Ninian to the Picts, could have been preserved without the knowledge of letters, preserved in the rhimes of bards, and the traditionary stories of fennachies.

HE could not have seriously entertained such an opinion, and at the same time see very good reasons for destroying so many Scottish and Irish Kings promiscuously, and without any mercy, whose existence depended on a similar authority.

BUT why were the Scottish Kings destroyed, and the Pictish monarchs spared? Why, because the annalists, historians, sennachies and antiquaries of Ireland are universally agreed that the Pictish monarchy is coeval with their own; and Irish writers cannot be suspected of dishonesty or ignorance in a matter of this kind. "They had no private motives of their own, to invent this story of the antiquity of the Pictish settlement and monarchy. They would not, without a necessity, put a foreign people upon a level with their own, in the two advantages upon which they chiefly valued themselves: and hence it follows, that the Irish writers must have had good information in this affair *."

It is amazing how Innes could have prevailed with himself to follow Irish guides through the impenetrable darkness of the Pictish antiquities. He himself has been at extraordinary pains to prove that these guides are, of all others, the blindest and most faithless: if so, how can they who adopt their doctrine hinder themselves from suspecting both their honesty and intelligence? There is no small

* Inn. Crit. Ess. p. 104.

difficulty in explaining the motives by which the inventors of historical fable, in the several ages and countries of the world, are led to frame and publish their fictions.

BUT the writers of Ireland had it seems a private view, though a somewhat remarkable one, for carrying up the antiquity of the Pictish monarchy to so great a height. Keating affirms, that it was from Ireland the Picts got their wives when they went to settle in Britain *. Other Hibernian historians inform us, that *Cathluan* was married to one of those wives; that the first monarch of the Pictish line, and all his Pictish subjects, swore, in the most solemn manner, to devolve the government of the country they were to subdue upon the issue of those Hibernian women, and to continue it with them for ever. Why an oath became necessary in a case where the Picts must, in the nature of things, leave their territories to their progeny by the Irish ladies, as they had no other women, I shall leave to the Milesian sennachies to determine.

INNES endeavours to persuade us, that tradition, without the help of letters, might have preserved the names of the seventy Pictish Kings. Why then could not tradition preserve at least the names of the Kings who governed the western parts of Caledonia before Fergus the second? And what could hinder the Irish

* Gen. Hist. of Irel. p. 62.

from preserving, by means of the same oral chronicle; the names of all the monarchs or provincial Kings who reigned in their island before the time of *Léogaire* and *St. Patric*? All these depend upon the same degree of authority, and must stand or fall together.

It is to be observed, that the account given by the Irish sennachies and annalists of the Pictish nation and Pictish Kings, differs essentially from that taken by Innes from his Pictish Chronicle, and the Register of the Priory of St. Andrews*. According to the *Psalter Cashel*, quoted by Keating.†, and according to the books of *Lecan*, quoted by O Flaherty‡, Cathluan the son of *Gud* must be placed at the head of the Pictish royal line. But according to the catalogue published by Innes, *Cruithne* the son of *Cinge* was the founder of the Pictish monarchy. The *Psalter Cashel* and the book of *Lecan* are the two most valuable monuments of literary antiquity of which the Irish nation can boast; and if any stress can be laid on the authority of these, *Gud* the father of *Cathluan*, and generalissimo of the Picts, after killing his master *Policornus*, came all the way from Thrace into Ireland, where he and his people were very kindly received by *Criomthan* King of Leinster, and by *Heremon* monarch of the whole island. But Innes contends, that the Picts were of a British, and consequently of a Gaulish extraction: nor was he credulous enough

* Keat. Gen. Hist. of Irel. p. 60, 61, 62.

† Crit. Essay, p. 134, &c. 798.

‡ Flaherty Ogygia Dom. p. 190.

to admit on the authority of Irish records, that Gud or Cathluan, Cinge or Cruithne, had been regicides, or come from Thrace.

OF the Pictish monarchs, whose names are enumerated in the catalogues exhibited by Innes, we have no less than five, every one of whom wore the crown of Caledonia longer by twenty years than the famous Arganthonius reigned over Tarteffus. Each of these Pictish monarchs held the scepter a whole century; and one of them had the honour of equalling a very celebrated Irish * King in prowess. He fought one hundred battles, or rather put a happy period to a hundred wars. His name was *Druft*. He reigned in the beginning of the fifth age, and in his time the gospel was first preached to the Picts by St. Ninian. The Kings who filled the throne of Caledonia before this Druft, had, for the most part, the good fortune to have reigned longer, by very great odds, than any other race of princes that ever existed since the days of the fabulous Egyptian monarchy.

THE oldest domestic record that can pretend to throw any light on the history of Caledonia, is a small treatise published by Innes, in the Appendix to his Critical Essay †. This treatise must have been written about two hundred years before

* The famous Con Ceud-chathach of the Irish senachies.

† The title of this little treatise is, *De situ Albanix, &c. &c.* See the Appendix to the Crit. Essay, Numb. I.

Fordun's Scotichronicon. The author had his materials from Andrew bishop of Caithness, who was contemporary with King David the faint, and was a prelate of a very great reputation for sanctity, and historical knowledge. The treatise says, upon the bishop's authority, that the Picts reigned over all Albany, throughout a series of one thousand three hundred and sixty years, or at least one thousand and seventy. But the learned prelate told the author of this treatise, that Albany was of old divided into seven kingdoms, each of which had a sovereign of its own; and that every one of these sovereigns had a petty King under him. The most antient of those sovereigns was called *Ennegus*, if the bishop deserves any credit.

IN short, the history of those Pictish monarchs who reigned over Caledonia before St. Ninian's time, is no less dubious than that of those forty Scottish Kings whom Innes has been at so much pains to erase from the list of Scots Kings. We may therefore venture to affirm, that it is impossible to prove, from any probable history, that the Picts were governed by any general Kings before the time of Fergus the son of Erc, supposing that time to be the true æra of the commencement of the Scottish monarchy. If the Scots of modern times will, at all events, have spurious or nominal Kings in the list of their monarchs, Fergus the son of Ferchard, and his thirty-nine immediate successors, will answer their purpose much better than *Chruide* and his ideal descendants.

THE generality of the Scots historians place the beginning of the Scottish monarchy in the age of Alexander the Great. Every impartial judge will allow, that Innes has totally destroyed that part of their system *. But had Innes been consistent with himself, or had he pursued those principles from which he argued so successfully against the antiquity of the Scottish monarchy, it seems plain, that he would have likewise demolished that of the Pictish nation. The authority of the Pfallter Cashel, the book of conquests, the book with the snowy cover, and other Irish chronicles, either imaginary or invisible, would have gone for nothing with him: and had those Pictish chronicles mentioned by Andrew bishop of Caithness been extant in his time, we have great reason to believe that he would have found himself under the necessity of admitting that they contained little more than ill-digested legends.

BRUDIUS, a prince cotemporary with St. Columba, is the first Pictish King expressly mentioned by any writer of credit. It is impossible to ascertain what figure his ancestors made in Caledonia, and who were his predecessors in the throne of Pictavia. We know little concerning those Pictish Kings who succeeded Brudius. Bede informs us, that during the reign of one of them, the Picts killed Egfred King of Northumberland in battle, and destroyed the greatest part of his army. The venerable historian passes over in silence

* See the Crit. Essay, p. 102, 103, 104.

the name of the Pictish monarch in whose time this great event happened. The continuator of Nennius calls him Brudius, and adds further, that he commanded the Picts in that glorious and decisive battle. Bede speaks of another Pictish King, for whom he had a particular regard, though for a very indifferent reason. The name of that favorite monarch was *Naitan*. It was to him that Ceolfrid, abbot of Wiremouth, wrote his famous letter concerning Easter and the Tonfure ; a letter in which Bede himself had very probably a principal hand. Roger Hoveden and Simeon of Durham mention two other Pictish Kings, under the disfigured names of *Onnuft* and *Kinoth* * : and the sum total of their history, as far as it has been recorded by these writers, is, that Onnuft died in the year 761, and that Kinoth gave a kind reception to Alfred of Northumberland, who had been expelled his kingdom about the year 774. The accounts given by the Scots historians of several other Pictish Kings cannot much be depended on. Some of them were misinformed or led astray by inveterate prejudices, or too ready to believe legendary tales ; while others, possessed indeed of a great share of learning, chose to embellish their histories with fictions of their own, or to make room for the fables which had been invented by their predecessors. The stories told by the British historians, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and the author of the Eulogium,

* Their true names seem to be Hungus, Angus or Innis, and Cineach or Kenneth.

concerning Roderic a Pictish King, concerning Fulgenius, another prince of the same nation, and concerning the three Pictish colonies established in North Britain, deserve not the least attention. The curious in ill-contrived legends of this kind may be amply satisfied on that head, in archbishop Usher's antiquities *.

* Chap. xv. p. 300, &c.

DISSERTATION V.

Of the Pictish Language.

WE are told by Bede, that the inhabitants of Britain in his time, both studied and preached the gospel in the languages of five different nations, agreeably to the number of those books in which the law of God was written. These languages were the Saxon, British, Scottish, Pictish, and Roman *.

FROM this passage of that venerable author, some have concluded, and with some appearance of justice, that the languages of the Britons, Scots and Picts, were essentially different. Bede lived in the neighbourhood of the Pictish nation. The monastery of Girwy, to which he belonged †, stood near the mouth of the Tine. He could not have been a stranger to the British tongue, however much the Britons and Angles disagreed. He was personally well acquainted with many of the Irish Scots, and had a friendly partiality for their country. Besides, he has given us some specimens of his skill in the British, Scottish, and Pictish

* Bed. Hist. Eccles. lib. 1. cap. 1.

† Now Jarrow.

languages ; so that his authority should, according to the judgment of some very learned writers, weigh down all the arguments that have been brought to prove that the British tongue was the same with the Pictish *, or that the Scotch and Pictish languages were essentially the same †.

CAMBDEN seems to have had a profound veneration for Bede, and accordingly calls him “ the ornament of the old English nation.” But he took the liberty to differ from him in the affair now under consideration, and was at no small trouble to prove, that the British and Pictish were the same identical language.

It appears from that passage in Bede, on which so much stress is laid, in the present question, and likewise from another part of his history, that the good man had great satisfaction in finding that the number of languages spoken in this island corresponded exactly with the number of books in which the Mosaic law was written. Whether a pious inclination to justify this very edifying parallel may not have in some degree influenced him to believe too hastily that the British, Pictish, and Scottish languages were specifically different, we shall leave undetermined.

THE specimens which Bede has given of his skill in the Scottish or Galic tongue will do him very little

* Camden.

† Buchanan.

honour. His explanation of the local name *Alcluith* or Dumbarton, and his etymon of *Dalreudini*, argue too strongly that his knowledge of that language was extremely circumscribed *.

It is unnecessary to dispute with vehemence this pious writer's account of the languages which in his time prevailed in Britain. If an author of modern times should assert, that the gospel is now preached in Britain in five different languages, in the Welsh, in Galic, in French, in the English of Middlesex, and in the Scotch of Buchan, it may be presumed that no reasonable objections could be raised against the propriety of such an assertion; however true it may be that the two languages last mentioned are in substance the same, and understood more than tolerably well by the English and Scots reciprocally.

It is universally known that the Irish language, and the Galic of Scotland were originally the same. But the pronunciation is so different, that a public declamation in the Irish of Connaught would be as little understood by a Highland audience, as a discourse in the Doric of Syracuse would be by the Ionians of the lesser Asia.

* *Alcluith*, according to him, signifies the rock above Clyde, and *Dalreudini* the portion of Reuda. But in the Galic neither *Alcluith* signifies a rock, nor *Dalreudini* a part or portion, though the learned author of the *Archæologia Britannica* says otherwise, upon the faith of Bede's authority.

IF we allow that the language of the Picts and Scots, of antient times, were as different from one another as the Doric and Ionic dialects of the Greek, we will do all reasonable justice to Bede, and save the credit of his testimony. To grant more, would be too much indulgence, as shall appear in the course of this dissertation.

It is evident, that the names of most of the places in the Eastern division of Scotland, which was of old the country of the Picts, have manifestly a Galic origin. This is so well known that examples are altogether needless. Almost every village, river, hill and dale there, will furnish a decisive proof on this head*.

IF any one should beg the question, he may contend, that all these Galic names were framed by the Scots, after the extinction of the Pictish monarchy. And indeed the authority of Boece and Buchanan favour this opinion. These historians maintain that Kenneth, the son of Alpin, who subverted the monarchy of Pictavia, divided that district, which went once under the name of Horeftia, between two bro-

* We learn from a very old register of the priory of St. Andrews*, that Kilrymont, which was the ancient name of St. Andrews, was in the days of Hungus, the last Pictish King of that name, called *Muk-rofs*, and the town now called Queensferry, *Ardchinnechain*. But these two Pictish words are undoubtedly Galic; the first of them signifying, in that tongue, the wood, heath, or promontory of Swine; and the second, the peninsula of little Kenneth.

* See Dalrymple's Collect. p. 122.

thers Æneas and Mernus. From the first, say they, the district which now is called Angus, derived its name; and the county of Mearns was so called from the latter.

BUT an author* much older than them, and even prior to Fordun himself, informs us, that Ennegus, the Æneia of Boece, and the Angus of our time, received its name from Ennegus, the first Pictish King: and were it true that the names of villages, rivers, and mountains, in the Eastern parts of Scotland were altered by Kenneth Macalpin, and his successors, we beg leave to ask, How it came to pass that the names of many Pictish Kings were exactly the same with others that were common among the ancient Scots, and continue to be so among the Highlanders to this day? Were these names too created after the extinction of the Pictish monarchy? Or did the conquerors give unheard of appellations to the Kings of the conquered nation, as well as new denominations to the several parts of their land?

ANY one who chuses to investigate this matter, may consult the two catalogues of the Pictish Kings, published by Innes; and upon comparing their names with the true Galic names of the Scottish monarchs, as exhibited by the same author, he shall immediately discover a perfect identity in several instances †.

IT

* Andrew, bishop of Caithness.

† *Cineoch* or Kenneth, *Oengus* Ennegus, *Angus* or *Hungus*, *Elpin* or *Alpin*, *Ursen* Eogan, *Ewen* or *Eugenius*, *Urgbuis* or *Fergus*, *Canaul*:

It is impossible to prove, from any faithful record, that Kenneth M^cAlpin introduced a new language among his new subjects, after he had united the Pictish kingdom with that of the Scots. He was too wise a Prince to exterminate the brave and numerous people whom he had conquered, though some Scottish historians have been injudicious enough to believe so improbable a fiction. Kenneth was too ambitious to confine his views to North Britain. He endeavoured to extend his empire farther; and for that purpose invaded England six different times †. For a Prince of such a disposition, it would have been extremely impolitic to extirpate a nation he had subdued, or to extinguish their language, had it differed from that of his own nation.

WITHOUT endeavouring to produce examples from remote ages, we may conclude, from the present state of the European tongues, that the inhabitants of mountainous countries are remarkably tenacious of the language of their ancestors. The Spaniards near

naul or Conal, Castantine or Constantine, Domhnail or Dovenald. All these names were the proper appellations of Pictish Kings: and the very same names are found in the catalogues of the Scottish monarchs, every one of them excepting Hungus, which is unquestionably a Galic one, and very common among the Scots Highlanders, of these and former times. It is proper to observe, that all the Pictish names now mentioned belong wholly to those Pictish Kings who reigned after Brudius, St. Columba's convert.

† See Innes, Crit. Essay, p 782.

the bay of Biscay, the French of Bretagne, the old Britons of North Wales, the wild Irish of Connaught, and many Highlanders near the heart of Scotland, still retain the languages of their remotest ancestors. Neither ridicule, contempt, or the power of fashion, which subdues every thing, have been able to extinguish those languages. From this obstinacy of all nations in retaining their respective tongues, we may reasonably suppose, that if the Pictish language had differed much from the Galic, it would, like the Biscayan, Armorican, and old Scottish, have still preserved its being in some corner or other of those countries which belonged to the Pictish nation.

HENRY, archdeacon of Huntingdon, expresses his astonishment to find that the Pictish tongue was in his time totally extinguished, insomuch that the accounts given of it by writers of former ages had the appearance of downright fiction. Henry wrote his history within less than four hundred years after the Pictish nation was incorporated with the Scots. It is therefore matter of great surprize, that no vestige of the Pictish tongue remained in his time, if it differed at all from the Galic of the Scots. The arguments which may be drawn from the archdeacon's testimony is not more unfavourable to Buchanan's hypothesis than it is to that of the learned Cambden.

JOHN, prior of Hogulsted, another English historian, who had better opportunities of knowing the state of

North Britain than the archdeacon of Huntingdon, relates * that the Picts made a very considerable figure in the army of David the Saint, during his disputes with Stephen, King of England. The battle of Clitherbow, in which David obtained the victory, was fought, according to the prior †, by the English on one side, and by the Scots assisted by the Picts on the other. Before the battle of the standard was fought, the Picts insisted with great vehemence on their hereditary right of leading the van of the Scots army, and were gratified in their request by the King ‡. It cannot be imagined that these Picts who held the post of honour in the Scottish armies had been persecuted out of the use of their native language, nor can we suppose that they themselves held it in such contempt, as to abandon it voluntarily.

BUT should it be granted, without any necessity, that the Southern Picts had entirely forgot or lost the language of their ancestors, through the intercourse they had for some ages with the Walenses of Cumberland, the Saxons of Bernicia, and the Scots of Jarghaël, it may be presumed that the Picts of the North, the Picts of Murray particularly, would have preserved their native language long after the time of Henry of Huntingdon. The Picts of Murray, the Moravienſes of our old historians, had frequent disputes with the poste-

* Hen. Hunt. Hist. lib. 1.

† Joan prior Hogulf. ad annum, 1138.

‡ Rich. prior Hogulstad: ad annum, 1136.

rity of Malcolm Canemore, in vindication of the rights and privileges enjoyed by their Pictish ancestors; and it may be taken for granted, that they would have likewise fought with great spirit for their language, if invaded or persecuted: nor was it an easy matter to root that language from among them, though totally reduced to obedience in the thirteenth century, as the interior part of their country was full of mountains and inaccessible fastnesses.

It is certain that the Picts were in a respectable condition after the Duke of Normandy's accession to the throne of England. The great charter granted by that conqueror to his English subjects affords an unquestionable proof of this fact. It is not therefore credible that either the Pictish nation or Pictish tongue could have been entirely extinguished in the time of the archdeacon of Huntingdon.

INNES, as well as Cambden, is of opinion that the Picts spoke the British language. These two eminent antiquaries agreed in believing that the Picts or Caledonians had originally migrated from South Britain, and that the Scots were of Irish extraction. To establish those systems, it became necessary for them to prove that the British was the language of Scotland, and essentially different from the Galic. But the arguments which they produce are far from being conclusive.

CAMBDEN observes, and after him Innes, that *Aber*, a word denoting the mouth of a river, or the confluence of two rivers, was frequently prefixed to local names, in those parts of Britain which the Picts possessed, and that the same word is very common in Wales to this day. This cannot be denied. But the same word *Aber* is found in some parts of North Britain to which the Pictish empire did never extend. *Lochaber* is the name of a district in the Western Highlands, which had always belonged to the Scots.

SHOULD we suppose with Cambden, that the Irish went originally from South Britain, and also agree with him and Innes, that the Scots of Britain are of Irish extraction, what could have hindered either of those nations from using the word *Aber* like the Picts or Caledonians? The Irish might have very naturally borrowed that word and thousands more from their British ancestors, and the Scots from their Irish progenitors. But if the Irish, and of course the Scots, must be brought from Spain, a notion which Innes inclined to believe, the *Cantabri* and *Artabri* of Spain might have furnished the Irish, and consequently the Scots, with the word *Aber*, a word in which the two former nations, and therefore the two latter, were peculiarly interested.

STRATH is another word which Cambden has gleaned up from among the remains of the Pictish tongue. It signifies, as he justly observes, a valley through which runs a river or brook. But among all
the

the local names in those Western Highlands and isles in which the Picts were never settled, there is hardly any one so common as those which have the word *Strath* prefixed to them. Nor is there any difficulty in finding the same initial part of a local name in Ireland*.

THE only specious argument urged by the two antiquaries in defence of their opinion, is founded on a discovery which Bede has made for them. We are told by that writer, that *penuahel* signifies, in the Pictish language, the head of the wall, and very fortunately that word bears the same meaning in the British. But it is to be observed, that both Cambden and Innes were of opinion that Bede committed a mistake, when he affirmed that the British and Pictish were different languages. The same mistake, which we may infer from them, arose from Bede's want of critical knowledge in the British tongue, might have led him to think that *penuahel* was a Pictish word, when in reality it is British.

THE author of the *Eulogium Britanniae* informs us, that the same extremity of the Roman wall, which the Anglo-Saxon calls *penuahel*, went under the name of *cenuahil* in the Scottish tongue. Supposing then that Bede did not through mistake give us the British name of the wall's end, instead of the Pictish, the argument drawn by Cambden from *pennahael* proves with its full strength no more than this, that the Pict-

* Strathbane and Strabrane, and a hundred others.

ish and Scottish tongues differed in the initial letters of one word. And shall we infer from that immaterial difference that they were two distinct languages? We might as well conclude that the Doric and Ionic dialects of the Greek had no great relation to one another. We must likewise maintain that the Latin authors who wrote Caius Cæsar, and Cneius Pompeius, used a language different from those who wrote Gaius Cæsar and Gneius Pompeius.

THOUGH I contend for the identity of the Pictish and Scottish tongues, I would be understood to mean no more than that these languages were reciprocally intelligible to the respective nations by whom they were spoken. The Irish of Ulster differs in a considerable number of words from that of Connaught, as does the Galic of the western isles from that of Sutherland or Aberdeen shire. But the immaterial variations in these several idioms will never hinder one from affirming that the people of Connaught and Ulster speak the same Irish, and all the Highlanders of Scotland the same Galic.

By the Pictish tongue I mean, in the whole course of this dissertation, the language of the old Caledonians. If in the sequel it shall appear, that the Scots as well as Picts were the genuine descendants of the Caledonians, there will be no difficulty in supposing that they spoke the same language.

DISSERTATION VI.

Of the Scots.

THOUGH it is well known that the modern French and Germans are descended of the antient Franks and Allemans, it is impossible to assign the period of time in which they made the first great figure in their respective countries. Before the middle of the third century, their very names were unknown to the writers of Greece and Rome. It is therefore no matter of surprize, that the Picts and Scots, who possessed but a corner of a remote island, should remain equally unknown to historians till that period.

EUMENIUS, the panegyrist, is the oldest writer who speaks of the Picts, and Porphyrius, the philosopher, is the first who makes any mention of the Scots. It is well known that Porphyrius was an implacable enemy to the Mosaic and Christian institutions, and that he wrote with peculiar acrimony against both. In one of his objections against the former, he took occasion to speak of the Scottish nations. The words
of

of that objection have been preserved by St. Jerome, who translated them into Latin, from the original Greek, and they run in English thus : “ Neither has Britain a province fertile of tyrants, nor have the Scottish tribes, nor has any one of the barbarous nations, all around to the very ocean, heard of Moses or the Prophets *.”

CAMDEN, Usher, and several other eminent critics, have quoted this passage, as the language of the pagan philosopher, without ever suspecting its authenticity. But Innes is positive that it is Jerome's own invention. He says, “ That this passage is not “ Porphyrius's, but Jerome's own, this the epithet “ he gives to Britannia, of *fertilis provincia tyrannorum*, “ seems to demonstrate. For when Porphyrius, about “ A. D. 267. wrote the book against the Christian religion to which St. Jerome alludes in that passage, “ there had scarce till then appeared from Britain “ any considerable tyrant, or usurper against the empire : whereas, betwixt that year 267 and the year “ 412, when St. Jerome wrote his letter to Ctesiphont, “ there had risen in Britain no less than seven tyrants “ or usurpers.” After Innes had enumerated these tyrants, and observed that four of them were cotemporary with St. Jerome, he concludes, that Porphyrius had no real concern with the passage now under consideration.

* Neque enim Britannia, fertilis provincia tyrannorum, et Scotticæ gentes, omnesque usque ad oceanum per circuitum barbaræ nationes, Moysen Prophetasque cognoverant. Hieronym. Epist. ad Ctesiphont.

It will appear hereafter, that Innes had particular reasons of his own for ascribing this passage to Jerome. Had he acknowledged with other critics, that it belongs undoubtedly to Porphyrius, he would have pulled down his system with his own hands. But whatever his motive may have been for giving the words in question to the holy father, we shall in the mean time do full justice to his argument.

THE ancient writer, whoever he was, calls Britain, a province fertile in tyrants. If Porphyrius was the real writer, it is certain that he wrote in Greek; and if he meant to say no more than that Britain was full of Kings, he surely wrote proper Greek in calling those Kings *Τυράννοι*, or *tyrants*; nor would he have given us a false account, had he affirmed that Britain was divided between many Princes. This was certainly the case, before the Romans subdued the best part of this island; and the very character that an ancient author gives of Britain is, "It abounds in nations, and Kings of nations *."

BUT waving this consideration, Innes had no authority for maintaining that our author speaks of considerable tyrants or usurpers in the empire. There is not a syllable in the passage before us concerning tyrants from Britain who usurped the imperial dignity.

* Mela de Situ Orb. Lib. iii.

SOME of the thirty tyrants who tore the Roman empire into pieces, after Gallienus had abandoned himself entirely to sloth and sensuality, had, it is true, been governors of Britain, and had assumed the purple there. Among these tyrants were Lollianus, Victorinus, Posthumus, Tetricus, and Maximus, whose coins were, in Camden's time, seen more frequently in England than any where else. From that circumstance, that excellent antiquary concluded, with great appearance of reason, that these usurpers had been proprætors of Britain. He adds another to the number of tyrants now mentioned, that is, Cornelius Lælianus, a pretended Emperor, whose coins are found in Britain only *.

It cannot be ascertained that Porphyrius wrote his book against the Christian religion in the year 267. His master and friend Longinus, the critic, was put to death by Aurelian the Emperor, who died about nine years after that period; and Porphyrius may have written the treatise, out of which Jerome quotes the passage in dispute, some little time before the death of Aurelian, or the year 275. But supposing the date of the philosopher's book to be precisely what Innes makes it, the learned infidel had a good deal of reason to say of Britain, that it had been fertile in Kings in former ages, or fertile in tyrants in his own time †.

* Camden's Brit. Rom.

† See Tribellius Pollio's little book on the thirty Tyrants.

HAVING thus established the authority of that passage, in which the Scots are mentioned for the first time, we are to inquire next, where that nation, or the tribes who went under that name, were settled.

IT must be allowed that Porphyrius has not sufficiently cleared up this point. But archbishop Usher was surely too hasty in affirming that the philosopher places the Scottish nation without Britain, that is to say, somewhere else rather than in that island *. The Scots were without Britain, in one sense, and within it, in another, at the very time when Porphyrius wrote against Christianity. The very learned primate could not have been ignorant that the generality of Greek and Latin authors have appropriated the name *Britannia* to that part of the island which had been subdued by the Romans. Tacitus observes, in the very beginning of his history, that Britain had been lost to the empire, and was soon recovered. Claudian introduces Britannia to Stilicho, with a most humble and grateful address in her mouth, for the essential services done to her by that able general, who drove away the Picts and Scots from her territories: and Bede has frequently confined the name *Britanni* to the provincials, in contra-distinction to the Picts and their allies. All this is undeniably true; and therefore the Scottish nations mentioned by the philosopher may have been within the island of Great Britain, though discriminated from the provincial Britons.

* Usher. Antiquit. lib. xv. p. 380.

AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS is the next author who mentions the Scots: his account of them is, that “ In the tenth consulship of Constantius, and in the third of Julian, the incursions of the Scots and Picts, two wild nations who had broken the treaty of peace, laid waste those parts of Britain which lay near their confines: so that the provincials, oppressed with a series of devastations, began to entertain the most frightful apprehensions. Cæsar was passing the winter at Paris, when the Britons informed him of their distressful situation. He was quite at a loss how to behave in a conjuncture every way dangerous. He could not prevail with himself to leave Gaul, as the Alemans at that very time breathed out cruelty and war against him; nor did he at all think it prudent to cross the sea, in order to relieve his British subjects, as the Emperor Constant † had done on a similar occasion. He therefore judged it most convenient to send Lupicinus, an able general, into Britain, to re-establish the peace there, either by force or treaty *.”

As

† The British expedition of Constant happened in the year 343.

* Lhoyd, bishop of St. Asaph, far from allowing that the Romans had entered into a treaty with the Scots and Picts, would have us believe that those two barbarous nations had previously agreed among themselves to invade the Roman frontiers, in some certain places which they had marked out, as most fit for their purpose; and these places, according to him, are the *condicta loca* of Ammianus; *condicta* being joined in the construction to *loca*, and not to *rupta quiete*, according to our translation. But how came the historian to learn that the Scots and Picts had made an agreement concerning these
certain

As a learned English prelate has given his opinion, that all those Scots who invaded the Roman Britain were Irishmen, he found himself under the necessity of construing and expounding a part of this passage of Ammianus in a different sense. To satisfy the curious on this head, I have thrown at the bottom of the page the bishop of St. Asaph's construction of this paragraph.

WHATEVER success Lupicinus had in his war or negotiations with the Picts and Scots, it is certain that they, as also the Saxons and Attacots, harassed the provincial Britons incessantly, during the short reigns of Julian and Jovian *. In the reign of Valentinian, those barbarous nations reduced the provincial Britons to extreme misery, having killed *Tullofaudes* their general, and *Nectaridus* the warden of the maritime coast. In a word, they carried all before them,

certain places, and followed with great exactness that plan of operations which they had concerted before the commencement of that war? Supposing that Ammianus was privy to all their plans and compacts, what could he mean by informing us, that the Picts and Scots disturbed the tranquillity of the province, when they laid it waste? Devastations of that kind are never seen or felt, without a previous breach of the public tranquillity. *Gentium ferarum excursus, rupta quiete, condita loca limitibus vicina, vastabant.* So Lhoyd would have the words of the text pointed and construed. But in this disposition they look very much like a solecism in grammar and sense; while in the other, for which we contend, they are perfectly consistent with both. Livy has *condicere inducias*: and the same great historian opposes *quies* to *bellum*. Vid. Ammian. lib. xx.

* Ammian. lib. xxvi.

till,

till, in the year 368, Theodosius, the greatest general of that age, marched against them, at the head of a numerous army, defeated their plundering bands in every place, recovered all the Roman territories which they had seized, and erected those territories into a new province, to which he gave the name of *Valentia*. Having performed these exploits, he returned in triumph to court, no less eminent for his military virtues, says the historian, than *Furius Camillus* and *Papirius Cursor* had been in distant ages *.

THEODOSIUS, however victorious upon this occasion, was either not able, or too much in haste, to tame the wild nations of Britain, so far as to hinder them from renewing their incursions and ravages. The mighty feats he performed in the Orkneys, Thule, and the Hyperborean ocean, are the poetical creation of *Claudian*, who flattered the grandson of that general. The barbarous nations of the north were pouring in whole inundations of very formidable troops into the most fertile and important provinces of the empire; of consequence, the presence of *Theodosius* near the throne and principal scenes of action, became indispensibly necessary. We have therefore reason to believe, that he contented himself with regaining those territories which the Scots, Picts and Attacots, had wrested from the provincials; and it was undoubtedly in these territories that he erected the new province of *Valentia*; though *Gildas*, *Bede*,

* *Ammian. lib. xxvii.*

and after them a great number of modern writers, were of another opinion.

WHATEVER the extent or boundaries of Valentia may have been, it is certain that neither the Furius Camillus of the fourth century, nor Maximus the Spaniard, nor Stilcho's legions, nor walls either new or repaired, obstructed or intimidated the barbarians of North Britain, or confined them within their native hills. Impatient of controul, greedy of plunder, and thirsting for fame, they resumed their former spirit of conquest and devastation. They frequently invaded the southern division of the island, recovered the district of Valentia, and continued their hostilities, till Honorius resigned all his pretensions to Britain, and left the provincials to shift for themselves. It was between the 420 and 435 of the Christian æra that this inglorious, though involuntary, dereliction of Britain happened.

EVERY one must acknowlege, that the Scots and Picts were by much too powerful for the Britons, after they were abandoned by the Romans. The letter written by the degenerate provincials, to Ætius the consul, exhibits a most lively picture of their distresses. The following passage of it has been preserved by Gildas: "The barbarians drive us back to the sea: the sea drives us back to the barbarians: inevitable destruction must be our fate, in either of these ways: we are either killed or drowned."

SOME

SOME learned men, whose prejudices have led them far in extenuating the national antiquity of the British Scots, have found themselves under a necessity of allowing that the people who went under that name had settlements of their own in this island, within less than a century after it was abandoned by the Romans. But no Greek or Roman writer has informed them that the Scots had no settlements in Britain before the end or middle of the fifth century. Ammianus Marcellinus has not even furnished them with a dark hint, that the Scots who invaded the Roman province in the reign of Constans, Constantius, Julian, Jovian, and Valentinian, were Irish. This is so far from being the case, that he says, in plain terms, "That he had, in that part of his history which related to the Emperor Constans, given the exactest account of Britain, whether we regard its situation or inhabitants;—that it was therefore unnecessary to repeat that account in the history of Valentinian;—and that, of course, it was sufficient for him to say, that, in the reign of that Emperor, the Picts, who were divided into two nations, the Deucaledonians and Vecturiones, likewise the Attacots, a warlike race of men, and the Scots, roamed about through different parts of the province, and committed many depredations *."

BUT, from the latter part of this very passage, some antiquaries of note have concluded, that the

* Ammian. lib. xxvii.

Scots of Valentinian's time were no more than vagabonds in this island, and consequently unpossessed of any settlements. The historian, after mentioning the Scots, adds immediately, *per diversa vagantes*, "a people without any fixed habitations."

BEFORE this criticism is admitted, we must take the liberty to ask, whether the Picts and Attacots had any settlements in Britain at this time? They certainly had. Yet so it is that the expression from which the conclusion is drawn, relates equally to them. The sequel of the story proves this, beyond any possibility of contradiction. "The Saxons and Franks ravaged those parts of Britain which lay nearest to Gaul. The Picts, Attacots and Scots overran, plundered and laid waste several other parts. Theodosius the Roman general formed a resolution of applying the most efficacious remedy to all these calamities. Accordingly he divided his army, which was numerous, and conscious of its own strength, into several different bodies. This done, he took the field against all the hostile nations at once, and attacked their plundering bands with success, in the several places which they ravaged †." Here is a decisive proof that the Scots were vagabonds only in the same sense in which the other hostile nations were so. Not one of the five nations had a settlement in South Britain. But can it be reasonably inferred from this, that neither the Scots, nor any of the rest, possessed a

† Divisis plurifariam globis adortus est hostium vastatorias manus.
Ammian. lib. xxvii.

foot of ground in the northern division of the island?

AMMIANUS has said, that the Franks, and their neighbours the Saxons plundered the Gallican or Southern parts of the British province, sometimes by sea, and sometimes by land. But he has not so much as insinuated that the Scots were sea rovers; neither has he favoured a certain tribe of antiquaries with a single hint, from which they could venture to infer, that the Scots were either mercenary troops or auxiliaries, mustered up by the Picts in Ireland. This was so far from his meaning, that he makes the Scots principals in the war against the Britons, under the reign of Constantius.

IN short, Ammianus, who holds a respectable place among the historians of Rome, found the Scots in Britain in the year 360, and left them there. He found them likewise in the same country about the year 343. They had concluded either a truce or peace with the Emperor Constant, in that year, and broke it in his brother's reign.—He found them a formidable people in Britain, and as well established there as the Picts or Attacots, fifty years at least before any other author of tolerable credit has found the Scottish name in Ireland.

BUT these Scots, according to some, might have been adventurers from Ireland. This has been confidently affirmed by many able writers; and it has
been

been the general belief of many nations, that the Scots of Britain have derived their origin from the Irish. But as the bare authority of a thousand learned men is not equal to the force of one solid argument, nor the belief of several great nations more, in many instances, than a popular error, it is far from being impossible that these writers and whole nations may have been mistaken in the present case. That they were actually so, it is no crime to suspect, nor an unpardonable presumption to affirm, when it can be evinced that their belief is ill founded.

WERE it certain, or even highly probable, that the British Scots owe their name and existence to the ancient Irish, it is difficult to say why they should be ashamed of their origin. The Germans, South Britons and Caledonians were, before the birth of Christ, nations of much the same character with the old Hibernians, equally illiterate, equally unpolished, and equally barbarous in every respect. About the latter end of the first century, the difference between the Hibernians and the people of this island must have been inconsiderable. In the second, third and fourth centuries, the Caledonians, Picts and Attacots, were undoubtedly wild nations, and no less so than the Irish. In the fifth, sixth and seventh, religion and learning flourished in Ireland to such a degree, that it was commonly stiled the mother country of saints, and reputed the kingdom of arts and sciences. The Saxons and Angles sent thither many of their Princes and Princeesses, to have the benefit of a pious and

liberal education. It ought likewise to be acknowledged, that some of the most eminent teachers of North Britain received their instruction at the Irish seminaries of literature and religion.

IF the Irish of the middle ages became a degenerate race of men, we ought to consider that all nations have their dark and shining periods.—The domestic confusions of their government, and the cruel oppressions of the Danes, very much contributed to their national depravity. Even the English conquest, for some ages, rather suspended than introduced government among them. These misfortunes have, however, been for some time back removed, and we find that Ireland has gradually emerged from that cloud of national ignorance which involved it, and produced men who would do honor to any nation in Europe.

BUT notwithstanding all the national honor that might accrue to the Scots, from an Irish descent, yet that partiality I may be supposed to have for my countrymen will never induce me either to believe or support the venerable fiction of their Hibernian extraction. That my unbelief on this head is not ill founded, will best appear from a concise discussion of the antiquities of Ireland.

DISSERTATION VII.

The Irish Antiquities peculiarly dark and fabulous.

TO those who consider the ancient state of Ireland, which, from its situation, was little known to foreign writers, and was itself totally destitute of the use of letters, till the introduction of christianity by St. Patrick, it will be little the matter of surprize, that very few of the domestic transactions of that country have been handed down, with accuracy, to the present times. But Ireland has been peculiarly happy in its domestic means of preserving its internal history. Every thing material in its history, from the very first day of its population till it was conquered in part by the Norwegians, and in whole by the English, has been preserved in the most faithful records. Should any one ask what these records were; the great historiographer of Ireland furnished a list of them taken from books of indisputable authority which were to be seen in his own time*: nor has the same writer made any difficulty of affirming that the Irish annals are of a superior fidelity to any other annals in the world.

* Keat. pref. to his Hist. of Ireland.

As the antiquities of Ireland have an inseparable connection with those of North Britain, it is hardly possible to do justice to the latter without examining the former. We are therefore under a necessity of reviewing the Irish antiquities with a particular attention: but the utmost care will be taken to give no more unfair representation of them than what is to be found in the writings of those who have pleaded the cause of the Irish nation with the greatest zeal and learning.

IRELAND, says one of these zealous writers, lay uninhabited for the space of three hundred years after the flood. At the end of that period Partholanus, the son of *Scara*, arrived there with a thousand soldiers and some women. He had killed his father and mother in Greece, his native country, and that was the reason why he undertook this voyage into Ireland. If one is curious to know in what year of the world this adventurer took possession of that island, in what part of it he landed, and as some people are minutely inquisitive, about every thing in which great personages are interested, in what month, and in what day of the month, the annals of Ireland will give him entire satisfaction. Partholanus landed at *Tubbersceine* in Munster, on the fourteenth day of May precisely, and in the year of the world one thousand nine hundred and seventy eight.

THE same annals furnish us with a most circumstantial account of the lakes which broke out in Ireland

land during the reign of Partholanus, of the rivers which he found there, of his favourite grey-hound, of his consort's most scandalous behaviour, of his own death, and of that all consuming plague which swept away, in one week's time, all his posterity, and all their subjects; so that not a single man or woman remained alive in the whole kingdom. This extraordinary event happened about three hundred years after Partholanus had possessed himself of Ireland; and this total excision of his posterity and subjects, was a judgment inflicted upon that wicked man for the double parricide he had committed in Greece.

AFTER the extinction of this first Hibernian colony, Nemedius, another Prince of Magog's race, and the eleventh in descent from Noah *, repeopled the island, which had been a perfect wilderness for thirty years. Nemedius began his voyage in the Euxine Sea, and after a long and very strange navigation, arrived at length in Ireland. His fleet consisted of four and thirty transports, and every one of them was manned with thirty heroes.

THE great improvements made by this new sovereign in Ireland, the lakes which broke out there under his reign, the battles he fought against some African pirates, the grievous misfortune which broke his heart, the most cruel oppressions which his posterity and people suffered after his death; these and many other curious occurrences are set down at large in those annals to which we have already referred.

* Partholanus was the eighth.

THE Nemedians were so unmercifully used by the victorious Africans, that after several ineffectual efforts to recover their liberty, they found themselves under a necessity of quitting Ireland. They equipped a fleet consisting of eleven hundred and thirty transports, and put to sea under the command of three leaders. The first of these was the famous *Simon Breac*, who steered his course for Greece; the second was *To Chath*, another grandson of Nemedius, who sailed with his squadron to the Northern parts of Europe; the third was *Briatan Maol*, who landed in the North of Scotland. From this illustrious leader Britain derives its name, and the Welch their origin.

ABOUT two hundred and sixteen years after the death of Nemedius, the descendants of Simon Breac, and of his followers, returned from Greece into Ireland. They were conducted thither by five Princes or Chieftains of a very high reputation; and as a fifth part of the men who composed this new colony fell to the share of each of the said Princes, it was agreed that the island should be divided into five almost equal parts, and that one of these divisions should be allotted to each of the five Princes. The Irish historians have taken care to preserve the names of these old provincial Kings, and their subjects are the men whom they stile *Firbolgs*.

IF any one inclines to learn how these Firbolgs were driven out of Ireland, or totally enslaved after the loss of a hundred thousand men in one battle, the
Irish

Irish historians will inform him very particularly. They will let him know likewise that the *Tuath de Dannans*, by whom these Firbolgs were destroyed, or brought under the yoke, were a generation of Necromancers who came from Attica, Bœotia, and Achaia into Denmark, from Denmark into Scotland, and from Scotland into Ireland.

THERE are two very remarkable circumstances in the history of these *Tuath de Dannans*, which we cannot pass over in silence: the first is, that they understood magic to such a degree of perfection that they could restore life to those who had been slain in battle, and bring them into the field the next day: but in spite of their enchantments, the Assyrians were too many for them, and accordingly drove them out of Greece. The second circumstance that deserves our attention is this: from the four cities which the *Tuath de Dannans* possessed in Denmark, they carried away some noble reliques, a spear, a sword, a cauldron, and a stone. The last of these curiosities was called *lia fail*, and was that fatal marble chair on which the monarchs of Ireland first, and afterwards the Kings of Scotland were crowned. *Lia fail* was possessed of a very extraordinary virtue till after the birth of Christ. Whenever an Irish monarch was crowned, it made a strange noise, and appeared in a surprizing agitation.

BUT neither the wonder working forceries of the *Tuath de Dannans*, nor the amazing virtues of their

Danish reliques were able to deliver them out of the hands of the *Gadelians*, when they invaded Ireland. These Gadelians were the descendants of the celebrated Gathelus, and from him they derived their name.

GATHELUS or Gathelglas was a great personage who lived in Egypt, and contracted a friendship with Moses the legislator of the Jews. His mother was Scota, the daughter of Pharaoh Cingris, and his father was *Niul*, a Prince of extraordinary learning and rare accomplishments. *Niul* was the son of the illustrious *Feniusa Forfa*, a Scythian monarch, cotemporary with Nimrod, and the same monarch that, by the assistance of two excellent scholars, invented the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Irish alphabets.

THE precise time in which the posterity of Gathelus came into Spain, after a long series of strange peregrinations by sea and land, the manner in which they possessed themselves afterwards of Ireland, and the means by which they at last conquered a great part of North Britain, are related fully and minutely by that Irish historian from whom I have borrowed every thing told in this section concerning the Partholanians, Nemedians, Firbolgs, and Tuath de Dannans*.

ACCORDING to the same writer, the Gadelians or Scots conquered Ireland about the year of the world two thousand seven hundred and thirty six, or about

* Keating,

thirteen hundred years before the birth of Christ. The chief leaders under whose conduct the Gadelians made that conquest, were Heber and Heremon, two sons of Milesius, King of Spain, who was married to a second Scota, the daughter of another Pharaoh, quite different from him already mentioned. From either of these two Scota's, the Gadelians have been called Scots; and it is because all the Kings of Ireland, from the Spanish to the English conquest of that island, were descended from Heber and Heremon, the sons of Milesius, that the Irish historians call them the Princes of the *Milesian race*.

AN ingenious author who lately published some dissertations concerning the ancient history of Ireland, makes no difficulty of affirming that all the antiquaries of that country are unanimously agreed in fixing the epoch of the Milesian colony's arrival in Ireland about a thousand years before Christ*; but that gentleman

* Mr. O Connor's Dissert. on the ancient Hist. of Ireland, p. 110.— This O Connor, since Dr. Macpherson's death, has published another edition of his work, and has given an additional dissertation to the world, with remarks upon Mr. Macpherson, the translator of Ossian's poems. He seems to have been so galled with what that gentleman has said concerning the antiquities of Ireland, in his prefatory dissertations to, and notes upon, the works of Ossian, that he has totally laid aside good sense and argument, for scurrility and personal abuse. It is however to be hoped Mr. Macpherson will not honour with a reply such an illiberal attack, which is as impotent as it is low and ungentlemanly. When a man appears extremely angry upon a subject, which can only be supported by cool and temperate disquisition, it is a conclusive argument that he is sensible of the weakness of his cause, or

gentleman could not have been ignorant that Keating, Kennedy and others had placed the settlement of that colony in Ireland much earlier.

DONALD O NEIL, King of Ulster, informs Pope John XXII. that the three sons of Milesius had come into Hibernia from Cantabria, more than three thousand and five hundred years before that in which he wrote his letter to his Holiness, which was in the year 1317. This historical curiosity has been preserved by John de Fordun, and it may be presumed that the King of Ulster, and those other Princes who joined him in his epistolary correspondence with the Pope, would have consulted the ablest sennachies, and most authentic records of the country, before they could venture to write so confidently on a matter of such importance to the common father of all Christendom.

BUT were it undeniably true, that all the antiquaries, historians, and bards of Ireland, have fixed the epoch of the Milesian colony's arrival there in the very time assigned by Mr. O Connor, the question is, whether we can safely depend either on his, or upon their authority, in a matter of such antiquity? How did it appear to him, or how can it be made clear to others, that a Spanish colony did actually settle in Ireland

extreamly diffident of his own abilities to defend it. But as the character of modesty is not very conspicuous in Mr. O Connor's works, it would seem to me that his intemperate rage had its rise from a narrow and irascible spirit, thrown into confusion by the discovery made, by Mr. Macpherson, of the fabulousness of the Milesian system, which he himself had been at much pains to adorn: *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!*

about a thousand years before the birth of Christ? Is it probable in any degree that one of the remotest countries in Europe could have found out the art of preserving the memory of such distant events before letters were known to any of those Celtic nations who inhabited the same division of the world? And is there any one of those Celtic nations that can, with reason, pretend to give a credible account of their ancestors or their actions, at the distance of two thousand and eight hundred years back?

It may be asked also, whether we have any better evidence for believing the story of the Milesian colony than for believing that of the Partholans, Nemedians, Firbolgs, and Tuath de Dannans. If the Irish will give us leave to reject the story of these more ancient colonies, how can they save the credit of the famous *Psalter Casbel*, *Psalter nan-traun*, the *Book of conquests*, the *Book of the snowy back*, and that of all their other immortal manuscripts and traditions.

ANOTHER natural question is, how it came to pass that the Irish antiquaries and sennachies found out the connexion of Partholanus, Nemedius, Gathelus and Milesius, with Magog, Japhet, and Noah, when no Celtic nation in the world became acquainted with these patriarchal names before the promulgation of Christianity? Did the Scots of Porphyrius's time know Moses or the Prophets? And how came Moses himself to forget his excellent friend *Gathelus* *, or *Cingris*

* See Keat. Gen. Hist. of Ireland, p. 35 & 36.

his implacable enemy? The plain truth is this: That exact conformity which we find in the genealogies given by Moses and the Irish annalists, from the beginning of the antediluvian world, down to the third generation after Noah, affords a clear demonstration that the Irish annals and genealogies were framed some time after the books of Moses were known in Ireland.

BUT we are told positively, " That the use of letters was known in Ireland from a very early period. The Milesian colony imported the arts and sciences into that country from Spain. The long intercourse which the Spaniards had with the Egyptians, Phœnicians, Persians, and Grecians, had humanized them and their posterity to a very high degree. The Iberian or Spanish Scots who came into Ireland, under the conduct of Heber and Heremon, were, like their ancestors, wise, brave, humane, and polite. Their genius was strongly turned to literature as well as to arms. As they had several academies for martial exercises, so they had seminaries of learning established among them, and these richly endowed. In these seminaries they employed able professors of poetry, eloquence, philosophy and history. The philological parts of learning were in great request among them. Philosophy was patronized by their Kings, recommended by *Fileas*, and became the study of their great men, as without it no dignities could be obtained in the state. The Irish bards and sennachies had hereditary fees settled upon their families; and as they were obliged,

obliged, by the standing laws of the kingdom, to confine themselves to the proper business of their profession, it must be presumed that they made an extraordinary proficiency.

“BUT the Irish historiographers appointed by authority must have been peculiarly industrious and faithful. Their salaries were great; and their compositions were to undergo a very strict and impartial examination, in the public assemblies of the states of the kingdom. The Irish held triennial parliaments at *Tara*. A committee of every parliament was appointed to revise the work of every historiographer, before it could be published: and as it was prudently considered that the spirit of party might prevail in one of these committees and parliaments, it was ordained, that the same work should be re-examined by a new committee of a subsequent parliament.”

ALL that has been advanced here concerning the use of letters in Ireland, from the arrival of the Milesian colony, and concerning the flourishing state of learning there, has been copied from Mr. O Connor's *Dissertations*. O Flaherty had likewise been at great pains to justify the pretensions of his countrymen to an early knowledge of the sciences: But O Connor has equalled him in zeal, and exceeded him in dogmatical assertions.

It is needless to make any answer to the account of the learning of Ireland given by this writer, simply on his own authority. The ingenious father

Innes * has long ago convinced the candid and impartial, that the Irish were wholly unacquainted with letters, till St. Patric brought them into their country, about the year 432.

ONE of his arguments, and a very plausible one, is, that the very words in the Irish tongue which express what in English we call books, pens, paper, reading, writing, and letters, are manifestly Latin ones Hibernized.

INNES has totally destroyed all the proofs which O Flaherty had piled up in support of this absurd doctrine, and evinced, in the most satisfactory manner, that the *Bethluis nion* of the modern Irish is no more than the invention of a late age. All the Irish letters may be seen in Latin manuscripts written in foreign countries, which had not the least intercourse with Ireland.

THOSE who desire to be more fully satisfied in this matter, may consult Mr. Innes †; and to his arguments I shall beg leave to add one or two more, with a particular view to the doctrine promulgated by O Connor.

WERE it true that Ireland had been the seat of learning, and the mother of the sciences, long before the commencement of the Christian æra, it is abso-

* Mr. Innes's 2d part of his Critical Essay.

† Mr. Innes's 2d part of his Critical Essay, chap. 1. art. 2, 3, 4.
lutely

lutely incredible that the old Hibernians should have been so unfavourably characterized by Strabo, Mela, and Solinus. It is impossible to believe that no accounts of their extraordinary genius and passion for literature, their unexampled proficiency in philosophical knowledge, their most laudable munificence to the professors of eloquence, poetry, and theology, could have transpired, especially as the sea-ports of Ireland were better known than those of Britain, and more frequented by foreigners.—By what strange fatality has it happened, that the inhabitants of a country, so wonderfully well civilized, so early improved by their intercourse with Phœnicians, Carthaginians, Persians, and Egyptians, and so unconquerably tenacious of those excellent institutions which their ancestors transmitted to them, could have been represented by Strabo as savages more wild and unpollished than the Britons? Or could they have been described by Mela, as the most uncultivated of all nations?—The character which Solinus has drawn of them is equally unfavourable: he calls them a *nation void of humanity, inhospitable, and every way barbarous and atheistical*. These characters were certainly too severe: the vices and ignorance of the old Irish must have been cruelly exaggerated, and the writers now mentioned must not have been properly informed. But had the people of Ireland been that humane, generous, polite and literary people whom O Connor has described them, it is impossible to imagine that the world could have been so unjust to them, or that the

writers now mentioned could have been so grossly mistaken.

BESIDES, if it be certain that Ireland was the grand Emporium of the North in the first century;—that the Kings and armies of that country fought in Caledonia, against Agricola, before the Scots were settled in North Britain; that the Picts maintained a constant intercourse with the inhabitants of Hibernia, from the commencement of their respective monarchies; and that they frequently intermarried with their best families:—If all this be true, how was it possible that the old Caledonians and Picts could have been totally unacquainted with letters, and could have remained in their uncultivated state till the third or fourth century?

IF it is true, that Anglesey, on account of its vicinity to Ireland, then the country of literature and science, was the great British university for Druidical knowledge; if it is certain that there was the metropolitan's seat, and that the philosophers of Gaul came thither to finish their education*; how could South Britain have been destitute of histories, books and letters, till it was conquered and polished by the Romans?

SIR James Ware, one of the most diligent, and undoubtedly one of the most learned antiquaries.

* O Connor says, that the reason why learning flourished so early in Anglesey, was on account of its vicinity to Ireland.

that

that Ireland ever produced, has, in several passages of his works, given the sanction of his authority to the system which we have been now defending. That learned gentleman, though very willing to do all possible honour to his country, confesses ingenuously, *that all the knowledge now remaining of what passed in Ireland before the light of the gospel began to dawn there, is extremely little* †. And for that very good reason he has spoken of those matters with diffidence and caution. He begins his account of the Irish Kings no higher than Leogaire, who was cotemporary with St. Patric, and makes no scruple to acknowledge, that almost all that is related concerning that King's predecessors, is either mere fiction, or totally disguised with fable. He defends Bolandus in his opinion that the famous Apostle of the Irish was the person who introduced letters among them, and owns at the same time, that after the strictest enquiry, he was not able to discover any one tolerable writer of the history or antiquities of his own country more ancient than the *Psalter Cashel*, which was wrote in the tenth or eleventh age.

THIS system of the aboriginal literature of the Irish nation being subverted and ruined, the pretended accounts of their ancient colonies must together with it fall to the ground. In the dissertation which immediately follows this, I shall endeavour to investigate the genuine origin of the first inhabitants of Ireland.

† Perexiguam superesse notitiam rerum in Hibernia gestarum ante exortam ibi evangelii auroram liquido constat. Warius de Ant. Hib. in præfatione.

DISSERTATION VIII.

Of the original Inhabitants of Ireland.—That they went from Caledonia.—Why the Irish and British Scots were called Gaëls.

THE unprejudiced part of mankind will allow, with Sir James Ware; that the domestic history of Ireland, prior to the time of St. *Patric*, which is the earliest æra that can be affixed for the introduction of letters, is irretrievably lost. Tradition might for a time have preserved a confused shadow of great events. The compositions of bards and *fileas* may have transmitted through a few generations, some occasional achievements of their heroes; but nothing is more absurd than to depend on either for the regular and continued history of any nation.

THE glow of poetry which animates some of the compositions of the bards, the harmony of numbers, and the elegance of thought and expression, have, in some cases, taken such hold of the human mind, that they have undoubtedly been handed down through some generations without the aid of letters. The
poems

poems of Ossian lately given to the public, may convince the world of the truth of this observation, which, at first sight, may appear paradoxical. But a number of circumstances have concurred in the preservation of those monuments of genius. When the mind is impressed by the boldness of poetical figures and metaphors the memory seldom fails. Those figures cannot be introduced into a historical narration. The mind flags at the dull jingle of history in rhyme; and therefore no argument can be drawn to strengthen the historical traditions of fennachies and fleas from the preservation of the poems of Ossian.—The period, moreover, to which Ossian is fixed, is not so much beyond the introduction of letters into the North, but their assistance might have very early been received to perpetuate his compositions. We have among us many ancient manuscripts of detached pieces of his works, and these may have been copied from manuscripts still more ancient.

BUT the transmission of merely historical events, by the rhymes of a succession of bards, cannot deserve the same degree of faith. We know, in the Highlands of Scotland, how little our bards can be depended on in matters of fact, since we had it in our power to examine them by the criterion of true history. I therefore have rejected their idle tales concerning the antiquity of our nation, preferring the small, but more certain light we have from the writers of Greece and Rome, to all their incoherent and indigested fables. But as the Irish nation have not hitherto rejected the legends

legends of their bards and fileas, we are not to wonder at the strange mass of absurdity which they possess for their early history.

As it cannot be said that the Irish had the use of letters before the introduction of Christianity, so it is impossible to prove that they had any other infallible method of perpetuating the memory of events. The art of drawing hieroglyphics on pillars or rocks, notwithstanding their pretended intercourse with Egypt, it is certain they had not. Their wildest antiquaries do not even pretend it; and Keating absolutely disclaims it in the name of his whole nation.

FROM the accounts which that writer, and others who have adopted the same system, have given of the first inhabitants of Ireland, and its oldest colonies, it may be fairly concluded that the origin of that nation must be investigated any where rather than in its own annals.

CAMBDEN, whose conjectures are plausible as his learning was immense, seems to have been persuaded that the first inhabitants of Ireland must have gone from Britain. But afraid or averse to provoke a whole nation, at that time desperately in love with their traditionary genealogies, he speaks too faintly and with too much brevity on that subject.

THE arguments brought by that great antiquary to support his hypothesis, are in substance

these *: “The vast number of British words found in the Irish tongue; the similarity of old proper names in the two islands; that conformity of nature and customs which point out the connection of the two nations with each other; the denomination of a British isle given by some ancient writers to Hibernia, and of Britains to its inhabitants; and last of all, the shortness of the passage from Britain into Ireland.”

HAD Cambden told us in plain language, that by that part of Britain from which the first and earliest colonies went over to Ireland, he meant the Northern division of it, his arguments with regard to the origin of the Irish nation, would have been more if not perfectly convincing. The vicinity of the countries is a proof which pleads much more strongly for the Caledonians and *Mæatæ* of North Britain, than for the *Silures* or *Deviæ* or *Brigantes* of the South. The frequent visits of the Hibernian Scots in the Northern part of the island, and their long alliance with the Picts, furnish strong enough presumptions that these two nations were united by the ties of consanguinity, or sprung at first from the same stock. The two promontories now called the Mull of Galloway, and the Mull of Cantyre, lie more contiguous to Ireland than any part of England or Wales. The languages of the Caledonians and Scots were the same, and from the same principles it may be proven that the Pictish and Irish tongues were so likewise. All these considera-

* See Cambd. Hibernia, cap. 1.

tions taken together will induce any one to believe that the oldest inhabitants of Ireland were colonies from the Western parts of the modern Scotland.

TACITUS understood, by conversing with Agricola, that the Hibernians cotemporary with that great man differed not much in their genius, manners, and customs, from the Britains.

THE bulk of the Irish nation were a very different race of men from those on the Western coast of South Britain. Their languages, though plainly related to one another, are far from being reciprocally intelligible in both the countries: and till the Normans conquered some parts of Ireland, the people of that country had rather better opportunities than the Welsh to retain the language of their ancestors in its purity. Therefore as the Irish differs so essentially from the antient and modern Welsh, and is so nearly allied to the Galic or antient Scotch, it seems decisive that the Irish must have derived their language, and consequently their original from North Britain.

I SHALL endeavour in the sequel of these dissertations to shew that the Scots of Britain are the genuine posterity of the Caledonian Britains. If that attempt shall succeed, it will be readily granted that the Scots of Ireland went originally from Scotland. For it may be proved that a perfect similarity of genius, language, arms, dress, manners and customs, has subsisted

listened between the two nations from the earliest accounts of time.

THERE is one argument more which may be considered of some force, though of the grammatical kind.

THE Welsh to this day call the Irish and Scots *Guidbill**. The Irish and Highlanders of this kingdom give themselves this name reciprocally. We are told by a very able judge in such matters, that the Picts were called *Guidbill* by his countrymen of old. On the other hand, the English, Welsh, and all who speak English only, are distinguished by the Highlanders and genuine Irish, with the appellation of *Gaul*.

NATIONAL prejudices and antipathies run much too high every where. From that source national reflections will flow very naturally: formerly an unfavourable idea was annexed to the name of Highlander, and the people of that country, in return, gave the name *Gaul* to every foreigner or enemy of their nation, and affixed to it the ideas communicated by the words, *stranger, ignoble, cowardly, penurious, and un hospitable*. But the true original meaning of the name is, a man from Gaul. The ancient inhabitants of Scotland thought themselves of a different race from the people

* In the word *Guidbill*, the letters *db* are quiescent, so that it is pronounced almost in the same manner with *Gaël* or *Caël*, the name which the Irish and Highlanders of Scotland give themselves to this day.

of South Britain, a people who came at a later period from Gaul, and were of course strangers to them. It became therefore at last customary with them to call every foreigner *Gaul*, and every person who had his education in a remote country, or who affected to imitate the manners and fashions of other nations, *Gauldi*.

FROM the appellation of Guidhil or Gaël given indiscriminately to the Picts, Scots, and Irish, by the antient inhabitants of South Britain, we may reasonably infer that the latter were persuaded that these three nations had the same common original, and somewhat different from themselves. The Welsh, who are reckoned the genuine remains of these ancient South Britains, call themselves Kymrè in their own language; and had they been of opinion that the old Hibernians derived their blood from their own predecessors, is it probable that they would have confounded them with the Picts and Scots by giving the same national denomination to all?

To strengthen the argument drawn from the appellation now before us, it may be observed, that the Saxons who came from Germany into England, gave the name *Gaul*, with a small difference in the orthography, and less in the pronunciation, to those Britains of the South to whom they bore the greatest hatred. They called the Britains *Weales* in their own language, and *Gauli* in the Monkish Latin of the times. The reason why they affixed this mark of distinction to these Britains was, that they were in their opinion

descended from the Gauls on the continent: a nation against whom the old Germans, like their modern posterity, had entertained strong national prejudices *.

As it will be asked why the genuine Scots call themselves *Gaël* or *Caël*, their country *Caëldocht*, and every thing that looks like them and their country *Gaëltich*, I shall take the liberty to offer a conjecture which may tend to illustrate the subject under consideration.

MEN of letters will allow that the Germans, as well as the people of Gaul, were called *Celtes* by the Greeks †. It is likewise true, that the power of the letter *G* was in a vast number of words much the same with that of *K* among the Greeks, and *C* among the Latins ‡. These two observations being admitted, one may venture to say that *Gaelti*, in the language of the ancient Scots and Irish, is the same with the *Celtæ* of the Latins.

IF we examine the changes made by the Greeks and Romans in the personal and local names of the

* The initial *W* of the Teutonic is commonly equivalent to the *Gu* and simple *G* of the British, Irish, French, and Italian languages. Thus the *Weales* of the Anglo-Saxons is by the French pronounced and written *Galles*, as it is by the Irish and ancient Scots *Gaullive*: it is unnecessary to produce more instances. See Lhyod's Com. Etymol. under the letter *G*.

† Suidas in his Dictionary.

‡ Thus the Romans wrote *Carthaco* and *Carthago*, *pugna* and *pucna*, *vigesimus* and *vicesimus*, and the Greeks instead of the Latin *Caius* wrote *Γαυος*, &c.

Celtic language, the etymon now proposed can hardly be thought overstrained: at the worst it cannot be so absurd as that which deduces the name *Gaël* from the Gallæci of Spain, with whom the Scots have perhaps less connection than with the *Galatians* of Asia and the *Galatæ* of Europe.

THE etymon of *Gaël* or *Caël* being thus established, we have plainly the derivation of the *Caledonia* of the Romans. I have above observed that the Highlands of Scotland is known, to this day, by no other name among the natives, than by *Caël-dochd*, a word compounded of *Caël*, i. e. *Celts*, and *Do-ich* country. This observation was first suggested by the translator of Ossian's poems: and it is so obviously the original of *Caledonia*, that it is matter of some surprise it never was observed before. The inhabitants of the Highlands of Scotland call themselves emphatically *Na Caël*, i. e. *the Celts*. To the Irish they give the name of *Caël Eirinach*, i. e. *the Irish Celts*. Whether an argument could be drawn from this circumstance, that of old it was not the popular belief, that the Scots came originally from Ireland, I leave to others to determine.

If any one should incline to think that the ancient Irish and Scots had their denomination of *Gaël* from their imaginary founder, Gathelus, the son or husband of Scota, he may, while he pleases, enjoy an opinion once popular and still harmless. But it is scarcely less credible that Gathelus ever had any real existence,

existence, than that he was miraculously cured by Moses near the Red Sea. That young Prince had it seems the misfortune to be bit in the neck by a serpent, and the whole mass of his blood was immediately corrupted: but at the request of his father, Moses interposed very seasonably, and upon laying his wonder-working rod on the wound restored the youth to a perfect state of health, mean time there remained a green spot on that part of his body where the serpent had fixed her teeth. From this green spot he was ever after called *Gaidhil Glas*, that is the green or rather the grey: and Keating has inserted in his history a dozen of verses extracted from the faithful records of Tara, to prove that this illustrious Prince derived his right to the epithet *Glas* from the impression made on his body by the teeth of this monstrous snake.

UPON the whole, it appears evident, that Ireland was first peopled from Caledonia. The abettors of the high antiquities of Ireland have in some measure owned the existence of a British colony; but they were too much wedded to the indigested fictions of a Spanish extraction, to be convinced that all their ancestors went from this island. It would be no difficult matter to investigate the origin of the legendary fictions of the Irish nation; and to shew that they had not their rise in a very remote age. But a discussion of this sort is too unimportant in an age in which all but bigots to an absurd antiquity, ought, in the judgment of sober reason, to reject the Milesian fables; which bear about them the marks of their being invented
some

some time after Christianity was introduced into Ireland.

IN the course of my reading on the subject of these dissertations, I had an opportunity of examining all the Irish histories that have any pretensions to antiquity: I would have myself understood of those that have been given to the public: for though Ireland, as its annalists affirm, is crowded with ancient records, yet as they have been invisible to all but themselves, we may conclude, if they really exist, they throw very little advantageous light on the history of that country. The remarks I made I intend on some future occasion to throw together; though, as I above observed, the subject is unimportant, on account of the small degree of faith now given to the ancient domestic accounts of the Irish nation. But as in every age and country there are some enthusiasts that fondly believe the most extravagant fictions concerning the antiquity of their respective nations, so there are people that are ready to support that absurd enthusiasm. I may therefore, by some drawcanfir of this sort, be called forth to support, with further arguments, the opinion I have advanced concerning the antiquities of Ireland; and it was from foreseeing that a circumstance of this kind might happen, that I made notes upon the subject*.

* These notes are now in the possession of Mr. Macpherson, of Strathmahy, in the county of Inverness; a very ingenious and learned gentleman, who has made the antiquities of Ireland his particular study.

DISSERTATION IX.

Why the genuine Posterity of the ancient Caledonians were called Picts and Scots.

FATHER Innes, so often mentioned, and some other antiquaries of note, say, that “ the occasion and rise of the name of Scots afford a very probable conjecture that the owners of it came, at first, either from Scandia or Spain *.” These are Innes’s own words. According to him, the Scythæ and Scoti are names of a similar import and pronunciation; therefore it is natural to believe that the latter is derived from the former, and that the original Scots of North Britain were a Scythian colony.

SHOULD we reason from principles so vague, we might insist on the close connection between the name *Scotus* on the one hand, and *Scotusa* of Theffaly on the other. And would any one, possessed of common sense, infer from this resemblance or even identity of sounds, that the pretended conquerors of Ireland

* Critical Essay, p. 536.

came from Theffaly, and were perhaps the same with the myrmidons of Achilles?

INNES and other writers add further, that the argument is founded, not so much on the analogy of the names, as upon that conformity of manners and customs by which the Scots and Scythians were distinguished from all other nations.—It is difficult to shew wherein the conformity consisted: if it lay in their barbarity and peculiar wildness of manners, the *Scotusæ* of Thrace might have suited the comparison as well as the most unpolished parts of Scythia.

SHOULD a man of learning and abilities, even through humour, assert that the Scots came from Thrace, or the places adjacent, to the river Strymon, he might support his absurd hypothesis with many plausible observations. The Thracians have been very often called Scythians—*Scotusa* is nearly related to *Scotus*—the *Geloni* are not unlike the *Gaël* in sound; the *Geloni* painted themselves—The *Geloni* and the *Bifaltæ*, near *Scotusa*, drank the blood of horses and milk curdled together: the Scots of Ireland have frequently eat of the same composition, if common fame has not belied them. A writer of great reputation shews that the *Geloni* and *Bifaltæ*, and consequently the inhabitants of *Scotusa*, gave into this practice*.

* *Bifaltæ* quo more solent acerque *Gelonus*,
Cum fugit in Rhodopen, atque in deserta Getarum,
Et lac concretum cum sanguine potat equino. VIRG. Geor. iii.

NOT to insist on the conjectures of those who give a Scythian origin to the name of Scots, it is evident that at best it is no more than an idle fancy to bring the Scots from either Scandinavia or Spain, till the learned are able to discover the Scots among the old inhabitants of those distant countries. The geographers and historians of ancient times condemn those two systems, by their total silence on that head; and a hypothesis of this kind can never stand on so feeble a foundation as the distortion of the word *Scythæ* *.

AFTER all, it must be confessed, that it is extremely difficult to give any satisfactory etymology of the

* It was on the same false principles that the Irish shewed their connection with Spain; but the affinity between the names Hibernia and Iberia is no more than the shadow of a proof for supporting their ideal genealogy. The Greek and Latin names of the island are to be derived from its western situation, from the wintry temperament of its air and climate.—It may be likewise observed, that the first syllable of the Latin word Hibernia is always long in the Latin prosody, and the first syllable of Iberia short. From this circumstance it may, with some shew of probability, be inferred, that the poets were strangers to the relation between the Spaniards and the Irish. To suppose that the Greek name of Ireland, that is Ierne or Iouerna, comes from the Greek word which signifies *Holy*, is surely no more than a groundless fancy, though embraced by a learned gentleman. Had it come from that epithet, it must have been written with an aspiration, like Hiera, one of the *Agates*, and Hiera, one of the *Æolian* islands. One of the rivers in Spain is called Ierna by Mela. Ireland, like that river, was called Ierna, from the Celtic word *Iar*, that is West; and the name of *Erin*, by which it has been always known by the Irish and Highlanders of Scotland, is manifestly a compound of *Fair*, *West*, and *In*, *Island*.

name of Scots. It has puzzled the most eminent antiquaries that Britain has produced; and therefore I think it no dishonour to me to fail in a point where men of much greater abilities have not succeeded.

VARRO and Dionýsius Halicarnassensis disagree in their opinions concerning the etymon of Italia: nor are the derivations given of Gallia, Hispania, or Græcia, more certain. What shall we make of Europa, Asia and Africa? Camden, with all his erudition and indefatigable industry, was greatly embarrassed by the names Coritani, Silures, and many more nations, who made a very considerable figure in the country, which he illustrated with vast pains and equal success. Scaliger and Vossius, Grotius, Bochart, and Menage, have been very often unsuccessful in their endeavours to solve difficulties of this kind.

THERE is no reason why the Scots should be ashamed to acknowledge that the origin of their name is involved in darkness; while that of Rome, the Queen of nations, remains utterly inexplicable. Plutarch found and left it so. Solinus gives no less than four different etymons, all equally unsatisfactory. Why the capitals of Britain, France and Portugal, have been of old called Londinum, Lutetia and Olyssippo, are questions which have not hitherto been sufficiently cleared up, and probably never shall.

ALL we know with certainty concerning the appellation of *Scot* amounts to this, that it must have been

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at first a term of reproach, and consequently framed by enemies, rather than assumed by the nation afterwards distinguished by that name. The Highlanders, the genuine posterity of the ancient Scots, are absolute strangers to the name, and have been so from the beginning of time. All those who speak the *Galic* language call themselves *Albanich*, and their country *Alba*.

CONTUMELIOUS appellations have been given in all ages not only to individuals, but to whole bodies of people, through spite, or a satirical pleasantry natural to the human race. The *Pæones* of Macedonia were a quarrelsome race of men, and therefore were called *Pæones*. The Protestants of France and the Low Countries were nick-named Huguenots and *Gueux*, because their adversaries studied to make them ridiculous and contemptible. It is needless to multiply instances. The same ill-natured humour has been hitherto general, and will always continue so.

THE Picts, who possessed originally the northern and eastern, and in a later period, also the more southern divisions of North Britain, were at first more powerful than the Caledonians of the west. It is therefore easy to suppose that the Picts, from a principle of malevolence and pride, were ready enough to traduce and ridicule their weaker neighbours of Argyle. These two nations spoke the same language. In the *Galic* tongue *Scode* signifies a corner, or small division of a country. A corner of North Britain is the very name which Gyraldus Cambrensis

gave the little kingdom which the six sons of Muredus King of Ulster were said to have erected in Scotland *.

SCOT, in Galic, is much the same with *little* or *contemptible* in English ; and *Scottan*, literally speaking, signifies a small flock ; metaphorically it stands for a small body of men. For some one of the reasons couched under these disparaging epithets, their malicious or sneering neighbours may have given the opprobrious appellation of *Scot* to the ancestors of the Scots nation.

THE Allemans of Germany were at first an ignoble multitude, or a motley composition of many different tribes and nations. For that very reason, the reproachful name of *Allemans* † was framed by those who hated and despised them. But the deformity of that designation was afterwards covered with laurels, like the blemish which gave Cæsar so much pain ; and the whole Germanic body is now proud of a title, thought at first dishonourable. In the same way it may be naturally supposed, that the people of *Albany* were, after a course of ages, reconciled to the once disparaging name of *Scots*, upon finding that all other nations agreed in distinguishing them by it.

It is generally believed that the Picts derived their appellation from their characteristical custom of painting their bodies. This opinion seems to be

* The kingdom of Argyle, according to his information.

† Allemans, q. *All-mans*, a composition of nations.

supported by an expression of Claudian *; who shews, in another place, that the Picts continued the old practice of drawing the figures of animals on their limbs, after it had been abolished in South Britain †. But when the fashion of painting in the same way was universal in Britain, it may be asked, Why were not all the inhabitants called *Picti* by the Romans? Why were the Caledonians of the East distinguished by a name to which those of the West had the same right; for it is certain they used the *Glastum* of Pliny, and the *Vitrum* of Mela, in common? *Picti* is no more than an epithet: and as Virgil would have been guilty of an impropriety, had he called either the Geloni or Agathyrsi, *Picti*, without specifying the particular nation to which he applied that epithet, so the Romans in Britain would have been guilty of the same solecism, had they called the Eastern inhabitants of Caledonia *Picti*, without annexing a noun substantive to the adjective.

UPON weighing these difficulties, I am apt to believe that the name, out of which the Romans framed the designation of *Picti*, was originally a British one, and of a very different signification from the Latin word, which is equivalent to *Painted* in English. The name was very probably framed by the Scots to the West, or the *Mætae* to the South: and as it may

* Ille leves Mauros, nec falso nomine Pictos,
Edomit.

† ————— Ferroque notatas
Perlegit exanimis Picto moriente figuras. CLAUDIAN.

have been imposed after the expedition of Severus, it is no matter of wonder that it was unknown to all the Roman writers till the very end of the third century.

AFTER the reign of Caracalla, the design of conquering North Britain seems to have been totally laid aside by the Romans. The frequent competitions of rival Emperors, the public distractions unavoidably attending such contests, and a long succession of Princes, foolish, wicked and inactive, must have diverted their attention to other objects. The barbarians of Caledonia had sense enough to avail themselves of the advantages which an administration, so feeble and uncertain, must have afforded them. They made frequent incursions into the Roman provinces, and met with little opposition. Not long after, Constantius Chlorus came from the Continent into Britain, with an intention to make war upon them; but he died at York, before this design could be executed. It was probably much about that time that the Romans discovered that the most considerable nation among the unconquered Britons was called *Pictich*, a word corresponding in sound with the *Picti* in Latin: accordingly we find that Eumenius, the panegyrist, is the first Roman author who mentioned that people under this new name.

IN philological investigations of this kind, it is much easier to disapprove of the conjectures of others, than to offer a more rational one to the public. But

as new opinions, which turn only on verbal criticism, are very innocent, though perhaps they may be ill founded, I shall venture to give a new etymon of the name of *Picti*.

THE Highlanders, who speak the ancient language of Caledonia, express the name of that once famous nation, who were at last subdued by the Scots, by the word *Pictich*. They could not have borrowed this epithet from the Romans; for the illiterate part of the Highlanders have no idea that the Romans were in this island, or ever existed: yet the name now under consideration is very familiar to their ears. One of the ideas affixed to the word *Pictich*, or *Pictich*, is that odious one which the English express by the word *Plunderer*, or rather Thief. Therefore it is not improbable that their neighbours may have given that title to a people fond of depredation: and Dion gives us to understand, that the barbarians of North Britain took a peculiar pleasure in robberies; nor was this character, in these days of violence and ignorance, attended with much infamy: if the robber had the address to form, and the spirit to execute his unjust schemes, he was rather proud than ashamed of his conduct: all the honesty required at his hands, was not to encroach on the property of a friend or ally *.

* Those who may imagine that robbery was esteemed more honourable among the ancient Picts than among the other rude nations of mankind, may consult Thucydides, p. 3. b. i.

AMONG the Princes and chieftains whom Virgil has brought to the assistance of Turnus, we find some who bear a perfect resemblance to the plundering heroes of Pictavia. The picture which the poet has drawn of Ufens and his people may, without any impropriety, be applied to the ancient Caledonian tribe now under consideration.

Et te montosæ misere in prælia Nersæ,
 Ufens, insignem fama et felicibus armis :
 Horrida præcipue cui gens, assuetaque multo
 Venatu nemorum, duris Æquicula glebis
 Armati terram exercent, semperque recentis
 Convectare juvat prædas, et *vivere rapto*.

VIRG. ÆN. 7.

THE Brigantes of South Britain, the Brigantes of Ireland, the Brigantii near the Alps, and the inhabitants of Brigantium in Spain, derived their names from *Brigand* †, a Celtic word, which signifies a robber. The French have retained the original word in their language ; and the English have the word Brigantine, which properly signifies a vessel used by pyrates.

SEXTUS POMPEIUS observes, that thieves were, in the language of Gaul, called *Cimbri* ; and according to Plutarch, robbers went under the same name in Germany. The Cimbri had a strong propensity to robberies of a private nature, as well as to that species of depredation which goes under the name of war

† See Bullet. Dict. Celt. Fol. 2d, p. 211.

and

and public conquest. But if the Cimbri of Germany, and the Brigantes of South Britain, have borrowed their respective names from their desire of booty, or their success in plundering, it is far from being incredible that a Caledonian people might have been called *Pictich* by their neighbours, for their uncommon dexterity in the same way.

EVERY one knows, that the Borderers of England and Scotland distinguished themselves for many ages, by pillaging, plundering, and laying whole countries waste. In time of war these ravages may have been in some measure excusable.—But even after truces and pacifications had been solemnly ratified, the same barbarous practices were too fashionable on both sides to be desisted from; especially as they were attended with honour and encomium, rather than punishment or disgrace. It is hardly necessary to add, that this practice, though manifestly incompatible with the laws of all civilized nations, was tolerated, and perhaps encouraged, till the accession of James to the throne of England*.

THE explications I have ventured to give of the names Picts and Scots may be defective; but they can hardly be more so than those etymologies which have

* I am tempted to think that the ancient Selgovæ of Scotland, who lay North of the English Brigantes, were so called from the word *Sealg*, which, if literally taken, signifies *Hunting*, and metaphorically *Theft*. The Gadini, who were at no great distance from the Selgovæ, seem to be nothing else than *Gadicin* in Galic, that is to say, robbers or thieves.

been insisted on by men who may be justly called the oracles of erudition in matters of this kind. It may be likewise said that I have dwelt much longer on this subject than its importance deserves. In the mean time, I leave it to the judgment of common sense to determine, whether it is not more probable that the Picts derive their name from a British word, than from a Latin epithet *.

* Strabo, though a very judicious critic, historian, and geographer, imagined, very inconsiderately, that the Germans received their name from their being as like their neighbours of Gaul as if they had been their Brothers-German. Bede, though a Saxon himself, and the most eminent scholar of his time, entertained a fancy that the name Anglus should be traced up to the Latin word *Angulus*, or a Corner. This conceit was little better than the puns of Pope Gregory at Rome, upon the words *Angli* and *Angeli*, *Deiri* and *De ira*, *Aella* and *Alleluja* †. And can it be matter of wonder that Claudian should have found the etymon of the Pictish name in the Latin tongue, especially as these Caledonians were painted, and as the analogy between the British word *Pictich* and the Roman *Picti* was so very close?

† Bed. Hist. Eccles. lib. 2. cap. 1.

DISSERTATION X.

The Highlanders Strangers to the National Name of Scots.—Call themselves *Albanich*, or ancient Britons—Gaël, or Celtæ.—Observations on the Irish, Galic and Welch Languages.

FROM what has been said in the preceding dissertation, it appears, that the names of *Picts* and *Scots* were imposed on the two nations into which the Caledonians were divided, some time before the Romans deserted Britain, by the malevolence of their neighbours to the South, or rose from the animosities which subsisted between themselves. The indigenal name of the Caledonians is the only one hitherto known among their genuine descendants, the Highlanders of Scotland.—They call themselves *Albanich* to this day. All the illiterate Highlanders are as perfect strangers to the national name of Scot, as they are to that of Parthian or Arabian. If a common Highlander is asked, of what country he is, he immediately answers, that he is an *Albanich*, or *Gaël*.

IT is unnecessary to produce authorities to shew that the island, which now goes under the name of Britain, was in early ages called *Albion*. To search for a Hebrew or Phœnician etymon of *Albion* has been the folly of some learned writers. In vain have some attempted to derive it from the white cliffs near Dover, or from a Greek word which signifies a certain species of grain, or from a gigantic son of Neptune.

IN the Celtic language, of which so many different dialects were diffused over all the European nations of the West and North, and let me add, the Scythians of Asia, the vocable *Alp*, or *Alba*, signifies *High*. Of the Alpes Grajæ, Alpes Pœninæ, or Penninæ, and the Alpes Bastarnicæ, every man of letters has read.

IN the ancient language of Scotland, *Alp* signifies, invariably, an eminence. The Albani near the Caspian sea, the Albani of Macedon, the Albani of Italy, and the *Albanich* of Britain, had all the same right to a name founded on the same characteristical reason, the height or roughness of their respective countries. The same thing may be said of the Gaulish Albici near Massilia.

THE Celtic was undoubtedly the language of the Belgic Gaul. For this we have the authority of Strabo. That from the Belgic division of Gaul the first colony must have transmigrated into South Britain, must be readily allowed. The vicinity of the
two

two countries, and the shortness of the passage, is an argument in this case equal to a demonstration. It was natural enough for men, who had been once settled in the low plains of Belgium, to give the name of *Alba*, or *Albin*, to Britain, on comparing the face or appearance of it to that of their former country. Men who had come from the Netherlands would most probably have called this new world *Albin* in an oblique case, and *Alba* in the nominative. And it is to be observed, that almost all the local names of the Celtic tongue are energetical, and descriptive of the peculiar properties or appearance of places.

THE Greeks became in some degree acquainted with Britain, and its original name, long before the Romans had any opportunity of knowing either. Agreeably to the genius of their language, the former naturally gave a new termination to *Albin*; and their Albion must have, in process of time, passed to the Romans. But the true Celtic name of the island having travelled gradually into the remoter parts of it, was there retained, by a race of plain, uncivilized men, who having no intercourse with the Greeks, and very little with the Romans, adhered invariably to their mother tongue, and particularly to the local names which had been transmitted to them by their ancestors.

THAT all the territories once possessed by the old Caledonians were formerly called *Alba* in Galic, and Albania in the Latin of latter ages, is certain, beyond
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THE SCOTS CALLED ALBANICH

contradiction. In the little ancient Chronicles of Scotland, published by Innes at the end of his Critical Essay, they go frequently under that name*; and Kenneth, the son of Alpin, who was the first Monarch of Caledonia, is called the first King of Albany, in some old Latin rhimes often quoted†. But had the Scots of Britain come originally from Ireland, their Latin name would have been very probably Hiberni, and their Galic one undoubtedly remain *Erinich*.

AFTER the Germans had conquered the southern division of Britain, to those who remained of the old inhabitants they gave the name of Weales and Gauls, in their own tongue, and of Brittones, in the Latin of the times; while they themselves thought it more honourable to retain their hereditary appellations of Saxons, Angles, and Jutes.

AMONG the most illustrious nations of antiquity, few have been equal, and scarce any superior, to the Gauls, in military glory. Sallust makes no difficulty of acknowledging, that in this respect they were before the Romans‡. Be that as it will, it is certain they had great merit in that way. Yet the Franks had too high a regard for their own genuine fame, and too profound a veneration for their ancestors, to

* Innes's Crit. Essay, in his Appendix, Num. 1, &c.

† Primus in Albania fertur regnasse Kenethus,
Filius Alpini, proel a multa gerens.

‡ Sallust. in Catilina, cap. liii.

assume the name of the Gauls, after they had possessed themselves of their country.

To strengthen the observation I am to make, it is almost needless to mention the Ionians of Asia, the Phocæans of Gaul, the Boii of Germany, the Longobardi of Italy, the Belgæ and Atrebates of South Britain. All these, and other innumerable colonies, who left their native countries, and planted themselves in foreign regions, made a point of retaining the proper names of those nations from which they were originally sprung.

HAD the Scots of Britain been a colony from Ireland, in spite of all the hard things said by Strabo, Mela, Solinus and others, to the prejudice of the old Hibernians; nay, if the universal consent of mankind, instead of three or four ancient writers, had agreed in calling the Irish savages, cannibals, atheists, and strangers to every virtue under heaven, the Scots, notwithstanding, would have admired their ancestors superstitiously, and retained their name, rather than degrade themselves into *Albanich*. But no British Scot has ever yet called himself an Hibernian in a learned language, nor *Erinich* in his own mother tongue. Every Scot who understands the Galic calls himself, as I observed before, either *Gaël*, that is, one of the Celtæ, or *Albanich*, in other words, a genuine Briton.

Not all the sensible and quaint observations of civilized times will eradicate from the minds of the bulk of a people the high opinion they entertain of themselves, for their connexion with renowned national ancestors; and in every country national ancestors have a great deal of traditional fame. It is true, the merit of remote progenitors is sometimes very small, frequently dubious, and always exaggerated by the partial fictions of their posterity.

THE founders of Rome were a very flagitious race: the vagabonds that associated with them an ignoble and abandoned rabble. Thieves, ruffians, desperadoes, bankrupts, cow-keepers, shepherds, slaves, ravishers of women, murderers of men, oppressors and usurpers, were the ancestors of the lords of the world*. Yet the Romans were extravagantly vain and proud of their origin. All other nations were in some degree influenced by the same puerile weakness.

BUT in the annals of mankind it is perhaps impossible to find a nation more vain in this respect than the old Irish. To say nothing of the antediluvian inhabitants of Ireland, and not to mention the Partholani-ans, Nemedians and others, the ideal connection they had with Scythian Kings, Egyptian Princesses, and Iberian heroes, inspired them with a very high idea of their own dignity, and perhaps with a propor-

* Majorum primus quisquis fuit ille tuorum,
Aut pastor fuit, aut illud quod dicere nolo.

JUVEN. Satyr. viii. ad finem.

tionable contempt for almost every other people. Had the Scots of Britain been the real posterity of a people so extravagantly fond of their ideal national ancestors, is it reasonable to believe that they would have rejected the name of Hibernians or *Erinich* with scorn, and preferred that of *Albanich*, a name which the Picts and old Caledonians must have carried in common with them?

FROM the appellation Kymri, Cumri or Cumeri, invariably retained by the Welsh, it has been concluded, and with reason, that, instead of being descended from the Romans, Saxons, Danes, Normans, or other interlopers into Britain, they are the genuine offspring of the ancient Gomerians or Cimbri. What therefore should hinder antiquaries from concluding likewise, the argument being exactly the same, that the Scots of Britain, who without interruption retained through all ages the name of *Albanich*, are sprung from the ancient inhabitants of *Albany*, and consequently were genuine Caledonians? The Welsh have preserved their original Celtic name. The Highlanders of North Britain retained the first appellation given to the inhabitants of the whole island. It will be asked perhaps, why the Welsh have not retained the appellation of *Albanich*. I shall offer a few remarks to clear up that difficulty.

It is certain that the languages spoken by the people of North Wales, by the Highlanders of Scotland, and by those commonly called the wild Irish,

are the most genuine remains of the ancient Celtic tongue now extant. The Cornish, Armorican, and Biscayan dialects, must yield the preference to the former three, however certain it is that in these dialects some true Celtic words have been preserved hitherto, which the Welsh, Highlanders, and Irish, have totally lost.

By the suffrage of reason, and from the experience of nations and ages, we find that the language of a people out of the way of foreign invasions, and unacquainted with the arts of commerce and civil life, has the best chance of continuing the same, or at least of undergoing the fewest alterations. Remote isles, secured by tempestuous seas, and mountainous tracts of land, environed with rocks, woods, and morasses, defended by a warlike race of men, and sterile enough to discourage the avarice or ambition of strangers, are the best means to fix and perpetuate a language.

It is true, no situation of country can secure a language altogether from the injuries of time, from the arbitrary power of fashion, and from the common fate of every sublunary thing. Some words must be imported by strangers, some created by whim. Some will rise out of new discoveries, and others must be framed to express new ideas conveyed by new objects. Language, in short, even independent of the mixture of nations, must be in a state of fluctuation. But after all that can be said to prove the natural and accidental

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instability

instability of language, rocks, seas and deserts, ignorance, sterility, and want of commerce, are its best preservatives, next to valuable books, and permanent records.

WHETHER Wales, Ireland, or the mountainous parts of North Britain, have retained the Celtic the nearest to its original simplicity, purity, or strength, is a question which, like all other matters of verbal criticism, is more amusing than useful, and differently resolved by the learned in that way. Of these some have declared for the country first named, others have determined the controversy in favour of the second, while the third, unfortunate in many respects, and particularly in its scarcity of domestic writers, has been entirely left out of the question.

EVERY one knows that the Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, had long and bloody contests with the ancient Kymri. In spite of all the brave struggles they made for liberty, and the honour of their country, it is certain they were enslaved by the first of the nations just mentioned, and brought under total subjection by the last. The intercourse they had with the other two was too considerable not to affect their language in some degree.

THE Norwegians and Danes made strong and successful efforts in Ireland. By them were the principal towns or cities there built. Turgeisus and his army made considerable acquisitions there, and was cruelly

oppressive. The Easterlings and Normans could never be totally exterminated out of that country. One of the bravest of the monarchs of Ireland, Brian Boroimbe, lost his life in the famous battle of Cluantarf, fighting against these foreigners. The Hibernian antiquaries are agreed in complaining bitterly that the barbarians of the North made a dreadful havock of their churches, monasteries, seminaries of learning, and books. The wars, commerce, and intermarriages of the Irish with the Easterlings, must have had some considerable influence on the language of Ireland.

THE Norwegians and Danes did likewise infest Scotland for a course of ages, made a conquest of the Western Isles, and erected a principality there, called the Kingdom of Man, as that island was the seat of their small empire in North Britain. But some of the Highland districts upon the Western continent of Scotland were never subjected to any foreign yoke; nor has the language of these districts been either exterminated, or till of late corrupted in any considerable degree, by an intermixture of that tongue which has been prevailing in the more civilized provinces of this kingdom for seven centuries back.

It will be readily granted, that the Irish and Welsh dialects of the Celtic tongue are more copious than the Galic of these districts of North Britain which I have just mentioned. I shall allow likewise that the two former dialects were better polished, and rendered perhaps more harmonious. The countries in
which

which they were spoke produced many books, and encouraged men of letters. But from these very considerations, it may perhaps with reason be inferred, that they receded farther from the simplicity of the original language than those who had neither opportunities nor inclination to refine or enrich it. Is it not certain that one of the academies of France, and the many books published by the members of it, have contributed much to destroy what they call the old Gaulish tongue in that country? And is it not equally true, that the modern universities of England and Scotland have, together with other causes, almost totally altered the language brought by the Saxons from Germany, and once common to much the greatest part of the first of these kingdoms, and to the most considerable division of the last.

I SHALL not carry the parallel between the Welsh, Irish, and Galic, much farther. They only who understand the three languages perfectly have a right to decide in this dispute. Let me only observe, that the learned author of the *Archæologia Britannica*, one of the ablest judges the republic of letters has produced, made no scruple to say, though a Welshman himself, that if the Irish, Scotch, and Welsh, are compared with the ancient language of Gaul, the latter will be found to agree less with it than the other two. Certain it is that the meaning of many Celtic words which have been preserved by the Roman writers, and particularly names personal and local, the signification of which has confounded the
skill.

skill of our best antiquaries, may be easily discovered by those who are no more than indifferently conversant in the Galic.

To exemplify the general position laid down by the author of the *Archæologia*, the word *Ifca*, once so common in South Britain, *Ifca Silurum*, *Ifca Danmoniorum*, *Ifca Legionis Secundæ*, and so on, common, I mean, in time of the Romans, signifies plainly *Water* or a *River*, in the Galic and Irish. The Welsh have lost the signification, and almost the use of that word, which is *Uisce* in the languages just named, and *Wyſk* in that of the old Kymri. For that reason the learned Cambden was not able to find out the meaning of *Ifca*, in the names mentioned above. But in all the divisions of Britain were many rivers which had no other names than the general appellatives of *Uisk*, *Avon*, *Wy* and *Taw* *. In Scotland are many such which are called *Eſk*,

* The largest river in Scotland is called *Taw* in the Galic, the most noted rivers in Wales are called *Taff*, and the Thames, the noblest river in Britain, was undoubtedly called *Tamb* in the old language of the country. *Tamb* signifies the ocean, or great sea, in Galic, and *Mor Tauch* has the same meaning in the Welsh. I am persuaded that these rivers obtained the names now mentioned, because they are ocean like, or seas, if compared to smaller streams; just as the Hebrews, and sometimes the Romans, gave the name of a sea to a large collection of fresh water. For the same reason was the *Tagus* of Lusitania so called; the *Taio* of the present times, a word which comes nearer to the old Celtic name of that river. Here likewise it may be observed that the *Duriæ* of the Alpine regions, the *Durius* of Spain, and the *Duranius*

Eſk, though corruptly, to this day. In England are ſeveral *Avons*, and many ſmaller waters which have *wy* for their final ſyllable, as there is a large navigable one diſtinguiſhed by the ſame appellative. In the compound names of South Britain, we often find *Ex*; for example, Exeter, which answers to *Eſk* of Scotland. In Yorkſhire is a rivulet called *Wyſke*, and in Monmouthſhire is a larger ſtream which goes under the name of *Wyſk*.

CAMBDEN has been at ſome pains to prove that the word *Braccæ*, which was undoubtedly a Celtic one, ſignifying a party-coloured garment, is preſerved to this day in ſome manner by the Welch, *Brati* in their language being the ſame with foul tattered clothes. The learned antiquary made this remark, together with many more in the grammatical way, to prove that the language of South Britain was of old the ſame with that of Gaul. How far he has ſucceeded in the compariſon drawn between *Braccæ* and *Brati*, I ſhall not ſay. But in the Galic tongue, the word *Braccan** is in common uſe to this day, and the idea affixed to

Duranius of Gaul, are all appellative nouns, derived from the Celtic word *Dur* or water; and I add farther, that almoſt all the large rivers in Europe have the vocables, *Avon*, *Iſc*, or *Dur*, either in the beginning or end of their names, though much diſguiſed by the inflections of Greek and Roman writers.

* *Braccan* is that kind of upper garment uſed by the Highlanders, which the Engliſh call *Plaid*: it is derived from the adjective *Breac*, ſignifying party-coloured.

it explains what the Gauls meant by their *Braccæ* much better than many learned critics had been able to do.

WE are told by Festus Pompeius, that the father of Roman eloquence, and his ancestors, had the name *Tullius* from a cataract near the seat of the family. In the Galic, a flood or torrent like that which tumbles down from a cataract, is expressed by the word *Tuille*. But I have not been able to discover that the Welsh have preserved a word of the same sound and import in their language. It is hardly necessary to observe further that the Gauls were once possessed of many places in Italy, and must have left many local names behind them, some of which are extant to this day.

To conclude this tedious philological discussion: it is certain that many words in use to this day in the Highlands of Scotland, were once used in common by the Britons of the South, and the ancient Celtæ, though now discontinued in the language of Wales. From the whole I draw this conclusion: that the Welsh may have lost in their language the appellation of *Albanich*, though once common in their country, in the same manner that they lost the remarkable vocable *Uisc*, and many others that could be specified.

DISSERTATION XI.

Of the Genius, Manners and Customs of the
Caledonians, Picts and Scots.

THE Caledonians made war their great study, and the principal business of life. Agriculture was entirely neglected, or but faintly prosecuted, and the commercial arts were hardly known among them. The chase, an exercise manifestly subservient to a military life, was their favorite amusement. A peculiar attachment to the pleasures and advantages arising from such a course of life, gave them an uncommon degree of agility, vigour and patience to bear fatigue. Dio says, that they ran with extraordinary swiftness, and sustained cold, hunger and toil, with an amazing constancy. Herodian calls the barbarians of North Britain, incomparably brave, and insatiably fond of slaughter. Let history determine, whether they were ever conquered, or whether the Lords of mankind, the Romans, were so bravely
S repulsed

repulsed by any other nation, except the Parthians of the East, and the Germans of the West *.

It must be allowed, that the particular situation of the Caledonian territories gave great disadvantages to any enemy that invaded them ; and it is also certain, that the very same circumstance inured the inhabitants to all the hardships incident to a military life. The people of Numantia, whose dominions were confined within the narrow limits of a few mountains, gave much more trouble to the Roman arms than Antiochus the Great, and the prodigious host which he collected on the fertile plains of Asia. The genius of every soil naturally transfuses itself into the souls and bodies of its inhabitants. Caledonia was peculiarly adapted to that kind of life which we call barbarous. Its forests and mountains produced game in abundance. The severity of the climate, and the rugged face of the country, tended to strengthen the body, and inure the mind to hardships. These circumstances, however disagreeable they may appear in this age, were highly favourable to that martial spirit which subsisted among our ancestors ; and what

* An author, who has done honour to the age in which he lived, as well as to the country which gave him birth, has touched this subject with the usual felicity of his poetical genius.

Roma securi geris prætendit mænia Scotis.

Hic spe progressus posita Carrontis adundam

Terminus Aufonii signat divortia regni, &c.

BUCHANAN in Epithalamio Franc. Vales. & Mar. Scot. Reg.

would

would render Caledonia but a poor acquisition to the Romans, was the only means of its defence against them.

It is impossible to say, with certainty, at what time the Caledonians began to cultivate the ground. Under the reign of Severus they were absolute strangers to agriculture. They thought, like their *Celto-Scythian* brethren of Germany, * “ That he who acquires, with the continual sweat of his brow, what might be purchased all at once with a little blood, is destitute of spirit, genius and feeling.—One could more easily persuade them to brave all the perils of war, than to toil at the spade, or wait for the slow returns of Autumn.”

THEIR food was the natural produce of an uncultivated country, the flesh of tame animals, venison, fish, milk, and the spontaneous growth of their fields and woods. We cannot believe, on the authority of Strabo, though a very exact and judicious writer, that some Britons were barbarous enough not to have known the art of curdling milk: nor is it credible that they had an irreconcilable aversion to fish, though they had it in such plenty in their seas and rivers. Solinus relates, that the inhabitants of the Ebudæ lived on milk and fish only.

It is hardly necessary to observe, that the refinements of luxury were utterly unknown to the ancient

* Tacitus de mor. Germ. c. xiv.

inhabitants of Caledonia. One of their methods of preparing the flesh of animals killed in hunting, is very exactly described by Mr. Macpherson, the translator of Ossian's Poems. The same method was practised in Ireland. Nor is that specimen of our ancient cookery much unlike that which hitherto prevails among the modern Highlanders, on their hunting parties *.

* The Scots of the fourteenth century had not degenerated much from the simplicity of their forefathers in the article of living. In the reign of Robert Bruce, Randolph Earl of Murray, and Sir James Douglas, invaded the North of England, at the head of a select body of men inured to battles and fatigues. After these adventurers had penetrated farther than Durham, and committed dreadful ravages in their progress, Edward the Third saw the necessity of appearing against them in person. The two armies came at last very close to each other, being divided only by the river *Were*. They watched each other's motions for several days, without coming to a decisive action. At length, after Douglas, with a few men of approved resolution, had performed an extraordinary feat of prowess, the Scots quitted their camp, and marched off toward their own country. Some of the English, either to gratify curiosity, or in expectation of booty, took a view of the Scottish camp, and found there three hundred bags made of raw deer-skins, with the hair on them, and all these full of water and flesh, for the use of the men. The bags were contrived so as to answer the design of kettles. They found likewise a thousand wooden spits, with meat on them, ready to be roasted. Such was the luxury of the posterity of the ancient Caledonians, at the distance of little more than four ages back, and so well was their taste calculated for a military life. See Buchanan and Abercromby, under the reign of Robert Bruce.

WE learn from Cæsar, that the Britons of the South used brass plates and rings of iron by way of money : it is probable their neighbours of the North adopted the same custom. Herodian writes, that they held the last of these metals in the same degree of estimation which other nations placed on gold. Virius Lupus, one of the lieutenants or pro-prætors employed by Severus in Britain, purchased a peace from them with money. Agricola and his troops had probably taught them the use of coin.

THE Britons of the South began to understand the use of the mint soon after the Romans came first among them. There are extant to this day several coins belonging to their own native Kings, particularly Cunobiline and Caractacus. The first of these Princes was cotemporary with Augustus, and the latter with Claudius. If there were any pieces of money coined in North Britain within eight or nine centuries after that period, they are entirely lost or destroyed.

THE riches of the Caledonians consisted wholly in cattle. The case was much the same in several other countries, long after the world had been sufficiently peopled. An ancient author observes, in his account of Geryon, King of Spain, whom Hercules plundered of his cattle, that in those times herds were accounted the only wealth*. And Varro, the most

* Justin. Ep. lib. xliv. cap. 4.

learned writer of his age, derives pecunia, the Roman word for money, from pecus, which signifies cattle.

It is after property is long established, and some degree of commerce introduced, that money becomes the standard of wealth among nations. In the beginning of society, mankind do not think a piece of metal an equivalent for their flocks and herds. Should I be permitted to give my opinion concerning the origin of coin, I would trace it to that superstition which is inherent in human nature in rude times. The first coin was probably a portable image of a Divinity, which was worshipped by a community. The beauty of the metal, and the sacred awe arising from the figure of a God, first gave value to that kind of medals in the eyes of the savage; and as enthusiasm often gets the better of the love of property, he would not scruple to exchange his horse, or his ox, for that *Icon* of the power he adored.

AMBITION has been known, in every stage of society, to take advantage of the follies and weaknesses of mankind.— Kings, observing the reverence paid to those medals, by degrees substituted their own image, instead of that of the God, and by their authority stamped a value upon what we now call coin. From that time forward money became, as it were, the representative of property; and the great convenience it affords, from the ease with which it can be carried, made mankind almost universally adopt it as the standard of wealth.

It

It is probable that the barbarous inhabitants of North Britain imported the arts of husbandry from the neighbouring Roman province. The advantages arising from so great an improvement would have soon convinced them of their former ignorance : but among men inured to idleness, rapine and war, an art, cumbersome at first, and afterwards slow in rewarding the labourer's toil, would have made no very rapid progress.

Whatever may be said with regard to the rise and improvement of agriculture in North Britain, it is certain that the inhabitants were numerous, robust, high-spirited, and martial, and consequently well fed. They must have had therefore some means of subsistence, with which we are not thoroughly acquainted*. It has been already observed, that no country could be better adapted for an uncultivated life than the hills, vallies, rivers, woods and lakes of Caledonia. The inhabitants had no appetites of their own creation to gratify: happy in their ignorance of refinements, and by nature philosophers enough to rest satisfied with a competency. If their fare was at some times scanty, that disadvantage was rendered easy to them, by parsimony and patience, or was sufficiently compensated by the absence of luxury in all seasons. Want and toil could never enfeeble their bodies, or shorten their lives, so much as the excesses

* See Sir Robert Sibbald's *Miscellanea eruditæ antiquitatis—De Radice Chora.*

arising from affluence have done elsewhere. All the accounts of antiquity allow, that they were among the strongest, and healthiest, and bravest men in the world.

IN whatever degree the ancient inhabitants of Scotland possessed the necessaries of life, it is certain that they were remarkably hospitable. Hospitality is one of those virtues, which, if not peculiar to, is most commonly met with in a state of barbarity. It is after property has taken absolute possession of the mind, that the door is shut against the stranger. The Highlanders of our own time are beyond comparison more hospitable to strangers, and more ready to receive them into their houses, than their more civilized countrymen. Their manner of shewing this generous disposition may carry along with it, in the eyes of the polite part of mankind, a degree of rudeness; but it is an honest rudeness, and expressive of that primeval simplicity and goodness of heart which they derive from their ancestors the old Caledonians.

“ No people in the world, says Tacitus, indulge themselves more in the pleasure of giving a kind reception to friends, neighbours and strangers, than the old Germans. To drive away the stranger from one's door, is accounted a gross impiety. Every one entertains according to his wealth; and after the host has acted his part generously, he directs his guest to the nearest good family, and attends him thither,
without

without any previous invitation. This intrusion is so far from giving offence, that they are both received with the greatest frankness and civility. There is no distinction made between the acquaintance and stranger, as far as the laws of hospitality are concerned *."

ANY one acquainted with the manners and customs of the inhabitants of the Highlands, would be tempted to think the celebrated writer drew this good-natured picture from them. It was once universally a custom among them, nor is it yet totally discontinued, to accompany their guests to their next neighbour's house, and there, as it were, to resign them to his care and protection.

So far were the old Highlanders from denying any man the benefit of their *roofs* and *fire-sides*, as they express themselves, that many of them made a point of keeping their doors open by night as well as by day. They thought it inconsistent with the rules of honour and hospitality to ask the stranger abruptly, from what quarter of the world he came, or what his business was. This question could not be decently put till the year's end, if the family in which he sojourned was opulent, and the guest chose to stay so long.

IF it is an error to bestow too much praise on the good qualities of our ancestors, it is also unjust to

* Tacit. De mor. Germ. cap. xxi.

deny them every virtue, because we have taken it in our head to call them barbarous. Some people connect the vices and virtues of mankind with the periods of society in which they live, without considering that what we call the barbarous and polished stages of society, equally afford a field for the exertion of the good or bad principles of the human heart.—The only difference seems to be this: Among barbarians the faculties of the soul are more vigorous than in polished times; and of consequence, their virtues and vices are more strongly marked, than those of a civilized people.

THE old Caledonians were much addicted to robbery and plunder. Their posterity inherited the same vice through a long series of ages. Another high crime, of which the Caledonians and their posterity of remote times stood impeached, was, that they had their women, and brought up their children, in common. The first of these vices was countenanced by necessity, the opinion of the times, and the situation of those who were plundered. Property must be perfectly established, before the loss of it can be hurtful, or an incroachment on its laws is followed by disgrace. Besides, as depredations took place only between different tribes and nations, they may be considered as a species of war.

WITH regard to the other species of immorality, with which Dion and Jerom have impeached the old

* Dion and St. Jerom.

Caledonians, it is enough to say, that it is a vice to which the civilized are more addicted than barbarians. It is only when luxury prevails, that irregularities of this kind transcend the bounds prescribed by nature. Chastity is one of the great virtues of rude life: when the soul is active, it seldom sinks into shameful enormities. Horace has given a very lively picture of those impurities which prevailed in his own time, and takes occasion to remark, that such criminal gallantries were very far from being fashionable among those Romans who defeated Pyrrhus, Hannibal, and Antiochus the Great.

THE Caledonians and Scots, like the ancient Germans, were remarkable for the virtue of conjugal fidelity: "The men of that nation contented themselves with one wife each, excepting some few of their great ones; * nor were the laws of wedlock observed with greater reverence and strictness among any people. The nuptial bed was defended on the females side by an unconquerable modesty, which neither public assemblies, nor private entertainments, nor love epistles, had any opportunities of corrupting. Among the men, no one made a jest of vice; nor were matrimonial infidelities called the way of the world †."

* *Severa illic matrimonia : nec ullam morum partem magis laudaveris. Nam prope soli barbarorum singulis uxoribus contenti sunt, exceptis admodum paucis.* Tac. De mor. Germ.

† *Nemo illic vitia reddet : nec corrumpere et corrumpi seculum vocatur.* Idem ibidem, cap. 19.

THE prejudice of Dion and Jerom against the Caledonians or ancient Scots, concerning their having their wives in common, has some plausible foundation. In those times of remote antiquity, it is very natural to suppose that the Caledonians were not very well lodged. The whole people of the family, with their occasional guests, lay on rushes, on the same floor, and in the same apartment. This custom, till of late, prevailed amongst the most uncivilized part of the Highlanders, and was once universal over Britain. If we may judge of the ancient inhabitants of North Britain, by the present rudest part of the Highlanders, this circumstance of sleeping in the same apartment was not productive of that conjugal infidelity mentioned by Dion and the holy father.

THE inhabitants of South Britain were, in Cæsar's time, equally unpolished, their domestic œconomy much the same, and their habitations just as mean as those of the rudest Highlanders. It was natural for a stranger, of any delicacy, who saw the whole family lying together promiscuously, upon one continued bed of rushes, fern, or leaves, to imagine that the wives and children belonged to the males in common. Hence it was, that Cæsar entertained that false opinion of the South Britons: and hence Dion and Jerom's opinion with regard to those of the North. But nothing could have been more rash than the conclusions which they drew from these appearances. The people of Germany lay almost indiscriminately

minately together in the very same manner *: and we have been already told, by a very intelligent writer, that there was not any country which produced fewer instances of incontinence.

It is difficult to say how far the Caledonians may have employed themselves in cultivating the powers of the mind. The Druids †, those great teachers of all the other Celtic nations, were settled among them ; and it may be presumed that they reasoned like their brethren elsewhere, concerning the nature and extent of the universe, the magnitude of the celestial bodies, the power of the Gods, and the nature of the human soul.

It does not appear from history that the Caledonians had any public games, or schools of war ; but it is certain that their descendants used exercises perfectly similar to those of the Greek *Pentathla*. These were leaping, running, *throwing the stone*, as they express it in the Galic, darting the launce, and wrestling. All these diversions were peculiarly subservient to a martial life. And if to these exercises we add that of hunting, it is plain, that though they wanted acade-

* In omni domo nudi ac fordidi in hos artus in hæc corpora quæ miramur excrescunt. Inter eadem pecora, in eadem humo, degunt, &c. Tacit. de mor. Germ. cap. 20.

† The author wrote a dissertation on the Druids, and the rites of their religion, which he gave to the late ingenious and learned Sir James M'Donald, Baronet, and was unfortunately lost or mislaid among Sir James's papers.

mies, their military talents were cultivated to very good purpose; and must have been considerably improved, before they had any opportunities of engaging an enemy.

IN the Highlands and Islands, where the old customs of the Scots maintained their ground after they had been long abolished in the reformed parts of the kingdom, the most of those exercises were, till of late, held in high repute. They reckoned swiftness of foot one of the most considerable accomplishments. Nor was that manner of thinking peculiar to them: Homer seldom forgets to mark out this characteristical quality of his hero: and another eminent poet, in his lamentation over Saul and Jonathan, gives a peculiar praise to those Princes, on account of their swiftness. In Homer and Virgil, we see the champions of Greece, Phrygia and Italy, sometimes deciding their single combats, and the fate of battles, by throwing of rocky fragments.

THE old Britons had recourse to the same expedient on many occasions. To fit them for this method of fighting, a large round stone was placed near the gate of every chieftain's house. The stranger who happened to lodge there, or, if a man of rank, the strongest man of his retinue, were regularly invited by the host to try the power of their skill and strength on that sort of quoit.

LEAPING

LEAPING was another exercise in great esteem among the Scots of former days. Every chief, who had spirit enough to support the dignity of his name and fortune, kept a band of young and active warriors continually about his person, one of whose qualifications it was necessary should be agility in this kind of exercise. These warriors, or *Cathern*, were constantly employed in manly exercises and recreations in time of peace, and served the chief as a kind of body guards. Wrestling was their great and favourite exercise. Boys were inured to it early, and stimulated to it by prizes suited to their taste and passions. When one chieftain paid a visit to another, after the first civilities were over, the wrestlers retained by each came first to a trial of skill, and sometimes even to blows, unless their masters interposed.

THERE were declared combatants of this profession, who went about in quest of adventures, like Amycus, Castor and Pollux: they no sooner arrived at a hamlet, than they challenged all the inhabitants, demanding a tribute to be immediately paid, or a fair battle, *without any favour*, as they always expressed themselves. There are some men now living in the Highlands, who have seen these knights-errant; and we are told, that one of the most considerable chieftains in the Islands, at the distance of a few ages back, lost his life in fighting a champion of this order. The wrestler had affronted his whole clan: to vindicate the honour of his name, the chief encountered and overcame him; but by too violent an exertion of
his

his strength, he broke a blood vessel, and instantly expired.

It is well known that the Caledonians, and their descendants, had a particular dexterity in managing darts of every kind. The Scottish spearmen were famous, like the archers of England. The battles fought by these two nations, while in a state of mutual hostility, were often decided either by the superior skill of a body of spearmen of the former, or that of the archers of the latter. Their dexterity in handling those weapons must have descended to both nations from their remotest ancestors.

WE are told by Herodian and Dion, that the inhabitants of North Britain used the spear more than any other weapon. The latter adds a circumstance, omitted by every other ancient author : he says, that there was a piece of brass, in form of an apple, fixed to one end of their spears, which they shook, to terrify the enemy with its noise. I have conversed with old Highlanders, who have seen spears of that construction. The name they gave them was *Triniframma*. The critics are at a loss to find out what the *Framea* of the Germans may have been *. Tacitus shews that it was a spear ; and it is highly probable that it was contrived like those used by the ancient Caledonians. The Galic name justifies this opinion. Dion's *Brazen Apple* was called *Cnap-Starra* in the

* Lipsius, in his notes on Tacitus de mor. Germ. cap. 6.

language of the ancient Scots, that is, a Boss, like that on the middle of a shield, studded with nails of brass *.

FROM the observations made on the military customs and manly exercises of the Caledonians, and their posterity, in the more early ages, it may be concluded, were history silent, that they must have been extremely well trained for war. They were certainly strangers to all the polish of fine life: commerce, its fruits and advantages, were absolutely unknown to them; nor was a knowledge of these arts

* Among the ancient Scots, the common soldiers were called *Catherni*, or fighting bands. The Kerns of the English, the Kaitrine of the Scots Lowlanders, and the Caterva of the Romans, are all derived from this Celtic word. The Gauls had a word of much the same sound and meaning. We learn from tradition, that these Catherni were generally armed with darts and *skians*, or durks. These were the weapons which the Caledonians used in Dion's time. The helmet and coat of mail were reckoned incumbrances by that people, according to Herodian; nor can I find out that they were in fashion among their posterity, till the Danes and Norwegians began to infest the coasts of Britain and Ireland. It was by these Northern invaders that this heavy sort of armour was introduced into Scotland, together with the weapons commonly called *Lochaber axes*. These weapons were well steeled, and extremely sharp, and destructive in the hands of strong men. Those who were armed with such axes, and with helmets, coats of mail, and swords, went under the name of *Gall-glaich*, (by the English called *Galloglasses*.) They were generally men of distinguished strength, and commonly drawn up against the enemies cavalry. The designation of these soldiers proves, that the Scots and Irish borrowed these weapons from foreigners.

at all so necessary for them, as the virtues which they possessed are for men in a civilized state. When a state is invaded, and is in danger of falling a prey to an enemy ;—when the freedom and very existence of a people are at stake ; the warrior, and not the merchant, is the useful and valuable man. Great as the blessings of industry and commerce are, they become fatal, when they overwhelm the martial genius of a nation.

THE people of North Britain were in a state of war and military exertion for a thousand years after they became known in history. During all that time they had their freedom and settlements to defend from enemies, foreign or domestic. The spirit of the times, a principle of just revenge, or the laws of necessity, taught them to be warlike, and perhaps barbarous. Romans, provincial Britons, Saxons, Danes, Normans, and English foes, made frequent attempts on their liberty and country. When the Picts and Scots began to dispute for the empire of Albany, there was little room for the arts of peace ; nor was it possible to cultivate them with any degree of success. After the Picts had been subdued, the numerous pirates of Scandinavia, for a course of three hundred years, discouraged the Scots from minding the business of agriculture or civil life. Upon the death of Alexander the Third, under whose reign the Norwegians obliged themselves, by a formal treaty, to abstain from all future hostilities against
the

the dominions of Scotland, the kingdom became a scene of unparalleled miseries. Two successive competitions for its crown, and the cruel ambition of two English Monarchs; every way formidable, converted it into a field of blood and desolation. The selfish views of two regents, during the long captivity of James the First, the long minorities of his successors, their constant disputes with powerful Barons or Lords, too great to be loyal subjects; all these, and many more unfavourable circumstances, co-operated strongly in discouraging industry, and in encouraging violence and bloodshed.

FROM these considerations it follows, that the principal virtues of the nation were of the military kind. High-spirited, enterprising, and fearless of danger, they were almost continually in the field, carrying fire, sword and desolation into the territories of the enemy, defending their own against foreign invaders, or fighting the battles of their Kings, Lords and Chieftains, against rebels and competitors.

THOSE among the Scots of former generations who possessed the wealth of the times, maintained dignity of character, without pageantry. Their houses were accessible to the stranger and the distressed. Though void of superb decorations and a dazzling splendor, they were adorned with numerous bands of bold warriors, who passed their time in those amusements and exercises I have so particularly described.

THE tables of the old Scottish Lords and Chieftains, however ill supplied with exotic delicacies, abounded with the true pleasure of entertainment. The real generosity and unaffected complaisance of the open-hearted host appeared conspicuously in every circumstance, and gave the highest seasoning to the repast. Next to the glory arising from martial exploits, the reputation acquired by acts of hospitality was, in those ages, esteemed the highest honour. The bards displayed the whole power of their poetical abilities in celebrating the hero and beneficent man ; and they, in meriting the praises bestowed by those heralds of fame. The great men emulously strove to outvie one another in the manly virtues. A portion of the same noble ambition fell to the share of every individual, according to his rank in life. That is possibly the happiest period of a nation, when the practice of the generous and martial virtues become the amusement and object of every member of a community, in proportion to their respective situations *.

IT must however be confessed, that the national vices of those times were far from being few ; nor can it be denied, that the Scots of our present times have greatly the advantage of their ancestors in many respects. Property is now under the protection of the law ; and the civil magistrate possesses authority.

* In the old Galic there is but one word for a brave and good man, and but one for a land-holder and an hospitable man ; which sufficiently demonstrates the ideas the ancient Caledonians entertained concerning bravery and hospitality.

Agri-

Agriculture, the most useful of all arts, is studied, and has made great progress. Commerce is understood, and its advantages pursued. The mechanic and manufacturer furnish their country with several commodities, either useful or ornamental. Arts and sciences are patronized by some, esteemed by all, and with ardor pursued by many. Murders, robberies, and all the outrages and barbarities, are unfrequent, and individuals enjoy that liberty which has diffused itself over the whole nation.

BUT notwithstanding all these great and essential advantages, a doubt may be raised, Whether the virtues of our present times are more numerous, more sublime, more generous and disinterested, than those of our ancestors, in the dark ages of barbarism, poverty and confusion? If that question must be resolved in the affirmative, another will immediately rise out of the comparison; and that is, Whether our vices are fewer, or less unnatural?

No reasonable man will deny that commerce naturally produces an insatiable love of gain, and together with that boundless passion, all the arts of circumvention, perjuries, unmanly deceits, and gross frauds. Avarice and luxury are inseparable companions of riches: nor is it an easy matter to keep haughtiness, insolence and impiety at a due distance from an affluent fortune. The same ingenious arts which improve the taste, and polish the manners, have a tendency to effeminate the soul, so as to
prepare

prepare it for slavery. The refinements of good-breeding and insincerity go too frequently hand in hand. False learning may be worse than gross ignorance. That philosophy which tends neither to strengthen the mind, or improve the happy feelings of the heart, is worse than the instinctive feelings of the soul of the savage.

UPON the whole, it is difficult to prove, that opulent kingdoms possess a greater degree of virtue, and consequently of happiness, than the petty states from which they rose. The question is of a complex nature, and would require a longer discussion than would suit with a work of this kind. The best writers of antiquity have declared in favor of what we, with great impropriety perhaps, call barbarous times. Xenophon, towards the end of his *Cyropædia*, has discussed the point with great ability.

DISSERTATION XII.

A Tradition preserved by Bede considered.—A Parallel between the Manners and Customs of the Caledonians and ancient Germans.—General Reflections on the Subject.

IT was an established tradition a thousand years ago, that the Picts were the original inhabitants of the Northern division of Britain. Bede * says, in his ecclesiastical history, that they came to Caledonia from *Scythia*, the European part of which, according to Pliny †, comprehended Germany. The authority of the venerable writer was never questioned on this head; and a belief has ever since obtained that the Picts were a different race from the Gauls, who possessed the Southern parts of Britain. Though the hypothesis of deducing the origin of the Caledonians from the

* Bede, Hist. Eccles.

† Pliny, Nat. Hist. lib. ii. c. 13.

old Germans is improbable, on account of the distance of the two countries from one another, and the small progress that navigation must have made in so early a period, yet the opinion of Tacitus ‡ on that subject, weighed so much with me, that I examined this system with a good deal of attention.

THE result was, a parallel which I drew between the manners and customs of the old Caledonians, and those of Germany, as described by Tacitus. I am very sensible, that all nations in their primæval state are very similar in their genius, customs, and manners. Similar situations will, no doubt, create an identity of ideas. Hunting and war seem to be the sole business of nations in rude times, and it is no matter of surprise, that there should arise, from these occupations, a great affinity not only of some characteristic customs but even of language. It is not therefore with a design of strengthening the tradition preserved by Bede, that I give this parallel to the public, being persuaded that a similarity of a few striking customs is too feeble an argument for deducing the Caledonians from the old Germans, when common reason declares against a migration of this sort in such early times.

THE military character of the Caledonians and Germans were very similar. As they fought with the same spirit, so they used the same kind of weapons; the sword, dart, and shield. The swords of

‡ Tacit. Vita Agric. c. 26.

Germany were long and unwieldy *. Those of Caledonia were equally enormous. It was this very circumstance that gave a fatal disadvantage to her bravest sons in the battle they fought against Agricola near the Grampian mountains †.

We are told by Tacitus, that the German spear was immoderately long ‡; and every one conversant in the history of Scotland must know that the spear used of old in that country was remarkable in point of length.

VIRGIL speaks of a weapon properly Teutonic, which he calls *Cateia* §. All the commentators, down from old Servius, and together with them all the compilers of dictionaries, have mistaken the meaning of that word. *Cateia* is undoubtedly of a Celtic original, and in the Galic dialect of that tongue, signifies a *fiery dart* **. We learn from Cæsar that such darts were used by the Persians, a Belgic nation of German extract ††.

THE compositions of their ancient bards were the only records known to the old Caledonians. In one of these compositions, Cuchullin, the same hero that is so much celebrated in Ossian's poems, is said to have

* Plut. in Mario.

† Tacit. in Vita Agric. c. 26.

‡ Ann. l. ii. p. 49. Ed. Lips.

§ Teutonico ritu Soliti torquere Cateias. Æn. vii. v. 740.

** Bullet. Dictionnaire Celt. vol. ii. p. 608.

†† Tacit. de moribus Germ.

killed his friend Ferda in a mistake, with a dart kindled into a devouring flame by the strength of wind*.

THE Caledonian shield was short and narrow †. That of Germany was contrived in much the same manner ‡. The authority of that excellent writer §, who seems to have studied the real character of the two nations better than any other, has decided this point.

THE Germans painted their shields with beautiful colours ||. The old Britons adopted that custom. The rhymes of our ancient bards speak frequently of *shields stained with red*.

Dio relates that the Caledonians upon whom Severus made war were armed with that sort of dagger, which the English call *Durk*, and the Welsh, Irish, and Scots, *Bidog*. This appears likewise from an antique stone dug out of the remains of Antonine's wall, and preserved among the curiosities belonging to the university of Glasgow. On that stone are exhibited two Caledonian captives, and each with a *Durk* hanging down before him.

* That is, by a blacksmith's bellows. The words in the Galic original, are *Gathbulig* and *Craosack-dbearg*, words of the same import with Cæsar's *jaculum fervefactum*, and Virgil's *Cateia* or *Ga-tie*, i. e. *Gath* or *Cath*, a dart, and *tei*, of fire. The only difference is, that the Galic words are more poetically turned.

† Herod. l. iii. 47. ‡ Tacit. An. lib. iii. p. 47. Vit. Ag. c. 36.

§ Tacitus.

|| Seneca, in Apololocynthoisi.

I CANNOT

I CANNOT say whether all the Germanic nations used this kind of dagger; but the Saxons certainly did, if we may credit Windichindus, an author born of Saxon parents *; and it deserves notice, that the picture of a Saxon foldier, as it is drawn by that author, is in every one of its lines like that of a Highlander of the last age, or genuine Caledonian.

HERODIAN, in his description of these barbarous nations of Britain, who fought against Severus, takes occasion to observe, that they reckoned helmets and coats of mail absolute incumbrances. The country they inhabited was full of lakes, morasses, and inaccessible fastnesses, and that was the reason, according to him, why they used no such instruments of defence †. But the true reason seems to have been either a brave contempt for such unmanly impediments, or a natural attachment to the customs of their forefathers. The Germanic nations, in Trajan's time, had very few coats of mail, and scarce any helmets ‡. If we go back beyond that period, it may be presumed they had none at all.

UPON a comparison of the weapons used by the Gauls with those of the Germans, it will be easily found that the difference was very considerable: and hence some might infer, that the Caledonians borrowed the fashion of their arms from the latter rather than from the former.

* See Cambd. Brit. Art. Saxons. † Herod. lib. iii. v. 47.

‡ Tacit. de mor. Germ. p. 437. Ed. Lips.

THE shields of the Gauls were long, and their darts short. To prove this assertion several passages might be quoted from ancient authors. But one authority is sufficient; that passage in the *Æneid*, where, among a great variety of very beautiful figures, the picture of a Gaulish soldier is so finely drawn by Virgil*.

THE armies of the old Germans were made up of separate tribes. Their battalions consisted of men who had a natural connection with each other, men who had the same common interest in view, were engaged in the same pursuits of glory, and strongly cemented by an inviolable attachment to the same Chieftain. Tacitus, who probably understood the art of war, as he undoubtedly did the art of thinking justly, seems to give his hearty approbation to this part of the German discipline†.

“In a day of battle, says that author, the Chieftain thinks it highly dishonourable to yield. His warriors follow his path in the field with the most undaunted emulation and vigour. To die for him is their utmost ambition. But to survive his death, and to leave him dead in the field, are actions of everlasting infamy and disgrace. The Chieftain fights for victory, the warriors for the Chieftain‡.”

* Galli per dumos aderant

Duo quisque alpina coruscant

Gæsa manu, scutis protecti corpora longis. *Æneid* viii. v. 660, &c.

† Tacit. de mor. Germ. cap. 7.

‡ Tacit. *ibid.* cap. 14.

THE Caledonians of Agricola's time were made up of several different tribes, and these headed by independent Chieftains or Kings. Galgacus was no more than one of these petty sovereigns. An universal monarchy was unknown in North Britain till the ninth century; and after that form of government was established there, every distinct tribe or small nation fought, in a day of battle, under its own Chieftain or Lord. These Lords and Chieftains were accounted the common fathers of the nations or communities at the head of which their birth and merit had placed them. They were the great protectors of all, the hope and dread of every individual, and the common center of union, being equally dear to their kinsmen, their vassals, and their clients. It is natural to believe, without having recourse to history, that their friends and dependents would have risked their lives in the service of their Chieftains with greater zeal and alacrity than any hireling soldier will be apt to do for a Prince who happens to wear an imperial Crown.

AMONG the Germans there was a powerful nation distinguished by the name of Arians, of whom we have the following account. "The Arians are peculiarly fierce, and they study to heighten their natural ferocity by the help of art, and favourable opportunities. Their shields are black, their bodies are painted, and they make choice of the darkest nights for fighting their battles. The consequence is, that by the horrible appearance they make, and by the dreary aspect of their death-like armies, their enemies

must be greatly terrified: nor can any of these stand out against such new, and one may say, infernal objects; for the eyes of men are first of all overcome in battles *."

It is needless to say that the Caledonians painted their bodies like the Arians, and with the same design: nor will it be denied that the Britons of the South were once addicted to the same custom. Were we to admit the German extraction of the Picts, we might also suppose that this custom travelled Southward from Caledonia.

It is an opinion generally received, that the first inhabitants of South Britain came thither from Gaul. The vicinity of the two countries, and that close similitude which the Romans found in the religion, language and character of the respective inhabitants of the two countries, are the arguments with which Tacitus endeavours to establish this opinion; and these arguments are more than plausible. But whether the ancient inhabitants of South Britain came in general from the Belgic, Celtic, or Aquitanic division of Gaul, is a point which neither historians nor antiquaries have determined. That they came from the Belgic Gaul is undoubtedly the most probable hypothesis. But should it be supposed and allowed, that the three several divisions of Gaul sent their several colonies into this island, it will be difficult to prove that any of these colonies could have imported the fashion of painting their bodies. Their mother country was an absolute stranger to a

* Tacit. de mor. Germ. cap. 43.

custom so barbarous when they became first known to the Romans. It is therefore not improbable that the custom of painting faces and limbs, to strike the enemy with terror, arose first from the superior barbarism of the Caledonians, and travelled Southward to the Britons, who had come in a later and more civilized period from Gaul.

THE inhabitants of the Southern and Northern divisions of Britain must have had some intercourse, either in a hostile or a friendly way. And should it be supposed that the Brigantes of South Britain were more than once intimidated by the horrible figures imprinted on the bodies of their Northern enemies, and of course vanquished in several battles, it was natural enough for them to assume the same artificial ferocity which had given their enemies so manifest an advantage. The fashion of painting, being thus introduced into South Britain, was probably diffused in a course of ages, over all that part of the island, and the sooner so that it had been practised with success by the Brigantes, a people remarkably brave, numerous and powerful.

SHOULD the supposition now made be thought not absurd, it will be asked in the next place, how this barbarous custom of painting was introduced into Caledonia. It is difficult to say, unless it arose, as I have said, from the superior barbarity of a people living in a mountainous country. The abettors of the Germanic extraction of the Caledonians might draw a plausible argument from so characteristic a custom. The Arians of Germany, and the Caledonians of Britain,

Britain, were men of much the same character. Each of these nations was wild and ferocious. Each of them took care to heighten their innate ferocity by the help of art. Both nations exerted their whole strength of ingenuity, in giving themselves the most dreadful aspect possible; and to attack their enemy in the night time was one of those military arts which they practised in common *. It would therefore be a more rational system, to derive the original of the Caledonian Britons from the German Arians, than to draw their descent from the *Agathyrsi*, according to the opinion of Stillingfleet and Boece †.

CÆSAR has drawn a parallel between the Gauls and Germans. Upon comparing the manners and customs of those two great nations with those of the Caledonians, one may easily perceive that the customs of the latter bear a much nearer resemblance to the old Germans than to the Gauls.

* Tacit. ut supra, et in Vita Agric.

† The *Agathyrsi* were settled in a division of Sarmatia, at no small distance from the sea ‡. The *Geloni*, another nation who used paint in Sarmatia, lay to the East of the *Borysthenes*. It is not therefore easy to suppose that either the *Agathyrsi* or *Geloni* could transmit their custom of painting, or transport themselves into Britain. The seas that lay nearest to them, were the *Palus Mæotis*, the *Euxine*, and the *Baltic*: neither can it be reasonably supposed that they had any tolerable knowledge of navigation; and if the practice they made of painting was a good foundation for the strange conjecture made by Boece, a similar practice that prevailed among those *Ethiopians* in the army of *Xerxes* † will furnish any one else with another genealogical account of the *Caledonians* equally authentic.

‡ Vide Celt. Not. Orb. Ant. in Sarmatia.

† Herodot. lib. vii. c. 69.

“ THE Germans, says Cæsar, differ greatly in their manners from the Gauls. They neither have Druids to preside in religious affairs, nor do they mind sacrifices. Their whole lives are employed either in hunting or in cultivating the arts of a military life. They inure themselves early to toil and hardships. They are clad with skins or short mantles made of fur, so that a great part of their bodies is naked. To agriculture they give little or no attention. Their food consists principally of milk, cheese, and flesh. The only persons among them who have a property in land, are their magistrates and Princes. These give annually to the tribes and families who associate together under their protection, as much ground as they think proper, and where they see most convenient. In the ensuing year these great men oblige their dependents to shift their settlements.

“ WHEN a German nation is engaged in a war, either defensive or offensive, they invest the general to whom they commit the management of it, with a power of life and death. In time of peace they have no public magistrate: the Chiefs of the several districts and Clans distribute justice and decide controversies among those under their jurisdiction. Robbery is attended with no degree of infamy, if committed without the territories of the nation to which the robber belongs: nor do these men scruple to affirm before the world, that in order to exercise the youth, and to put a stop to the growth of effeminacy, that practice must be not only indulged, but encouraged.

In their public assemblies when any of their Chieftains undertakes to go at the head of such an expedition, those who give their approbation to his design rise up before the assembly, enlist themselves in the service, and are applauded by the multitude. They who break their engagements are reckoned traitors * and deserters: nor do they ever after recover their former honour †."

"THE Britons of the North, says Dio, till no ground, but live upon prey, hunting, and the fruits of the wood. They dwell in tents, naked and without shoes. They take peculiar pleasure in committing depredations. They endure hunger, cold, and every kind of hardship with wonderful patience ‡."

THE principal lines of this picture are extremely like those of the original we have been just now viewing; and the more we compare the accounts which ancient authors have given of the respective nations, the more we are struck with their similarity in genius and manners. Dio has indeed observed that the Caledonians went naked; but it may be presumed, that he meant no more than that they were

* One would think that Cæsar, in this passage, copied the manners of an American tribe of Indians upon a like occasion. This is the very method used by them in their assemblies, when they resolve on a war. There is a wonderful similarity between all nations in the first stage of society.

† Cæf. de Bel. Gal. lib. vi. cap. 21, 22, 23.

‡ Dio, lib. lxxii.

poorly clad. This is all that Eumenius, the panegyrist, has said concerning the habits of those Picts who fought against the Britons of the South, before Cæsar invaded this island: and Cæsar himself has told us that those who inhabited the inland parts of Britain in his time were cloathed with skins *. Whatever the opinion of Dio may have been on this subject, it is certain, that the Caledonians could hardly secure their lives against the natural severity of their climate, without some sort of cloathing, notwithstanding all their constitutional vigour and acquired hardiness.

It must be acknowledged that Herodian likewise seems to make the inhabitants of North Britain a naked people. His words are, “ These barbarians are strangers to the use of cloaths, but they trim their bellies and necks with iron trappings, being possessed with a belief that iron is ornamental and a sign of opulence, in the same manner that gold is esteemed by other nations. They mark their bodies with a variety of figures resembling many different animals. For this reason they take care not to cover their bodies, for fear of concealing these figures †.

BUT this author has told us in the passage immediately preceeding that now quoted, that these barbarians were far from being totally naked, the greatest part only of their bodies being so; and that must in all probability have been true.

* Cæsar de Bel. Gal. lib. v. cap. 14.

† Herod. lib. iii. cap. 47.

THE Greeks and Romans knew very little concerning the habits of the Caledonians, excepting those they wore in a day of battle. Upon such occasions they were indeed very slightly clad, if cloathed at all. Before the engagement began they threw away their upper garments, and marched up to the enemy having only a piece of thin stuff wrapped about their middle. The Highlanders of Scotland inherited the same custom so late as the battle of Killicranky, in which they fought in their shirts, having laid by their plaids and short coats before the action began. The old Germans behaved in the very same manner upon similar occasions.

THOSE who are very meanly or thinly clad are in common conversation called naked. Agreeable to this usual form of speech, Virgil advises the Italian farmer whether in ploughing or sowing his ground to work *naked*; that is to say, without that part of his garb that was no more than a real incumbrance to him †.

BESIDES the skins of beasts worn by the Caledonians, like the more barbarous inhabitants of Britain and Germany, there is reason to believe that they imitated the latter in another part of their habit. The Germans wore woollen mantles, and these sometimes party-coloured, though generally otherwise. A mantle of the latter kind was by the Romans called *Sagum*, and a party-

† Nudus ara fere nudus.

VIRG.

coloured

coloured one either *Sagum* or *Braccæ* promiscuously. The only garment of an ordinary German was, according to Tacitus, a mantle tacked together with a *Fibula*, or if that should be wanting they used a pin *. The *Fibula* was a buckle or ring made of a thin plate of silver, brass, or iron, with a needle running through the middle and joined to the buckle at one end. But if the person who wore the mantle was too poor to afford the fibula, a skewer made either of wood or bone was formed to answer its use. The buckle or skewer kept the two upper corners of the mantle together.

It must be allowed that the writers of ancient history are silent as to the garb worn by the Caledonians, Picts, and Scots: but in a matter of this kind, we may safely depend on the faith of tradition, especially when supported by immemorial custom; and we are informed by both, that the most ancient inhabitants of North Britain were clad with a *Sagum* tacked together about the neck with either a pin or buckle. If the *Sagum* was of one colour, it was called, in the language of the country, *Plaide*: if party-coloured or streaked with different dyes, it was called *Breaccan*.

VARRO observed that the word *Sagum* is of Celtic extract. The word *Braccæ* is so likewise. In the Galic tongue, which is perhaps the most genuine branch of

* Tegumen omnibus sagum, fibula aut si desit spina confertum. Cætera intecti, &c. Locupletissimi veste distinguuntur. Stricta et singulos artus exprimente *.

* Tacit. de mor. Germ. p. 442.

the old Celtic, *Saic* signifies a skin or hide. The Germans, like many other uncivilized nations, covered themselves with skins before they began to manufacture woollen stuffs; and as *Saic* was the name of their original garb, it is highly probable, that after the woollen mantle was introduced in its place, they gave it the well known name of their former covering. This conjecture is so much the more plausible that the form of their mantle was in a great degree similar to that of their old covering.

IF we consult either lexicographers, or the writers of notes critical and explanatory, we shall find some difficulty in settling the precise meaning of the word *Bracca*. But every Highlander in Britain knows that the *Bracca* was an upper garment of diverse colours. The very word is to this day preserved in the Galic language, with the addition of only a single letter, and, in the same language, any thing that is party-coloured is constantly distinguished by the epithet *Breac*.

BLUE was the favourite colour among the Caledonians*, or at least the most prevalent. That their women of quality used blue mantles may be concluded from a passage of Claudian †, as well as from tradition.

THE

* Solin. cap. xxxv.

† Inde Caledonico velata Britannia monstro
Ferro Picta genas, cujus vestigia verrit
Cærus, oceanique æstum mentitur amictus.

Claud. Imprim. Con. Stil.

THE only or principal difference between the dress of the males and females was, that the mantle of the latter flowed down to their ankles, as it did among the women of Germany. The use of the *Fibula* was common both to the men and the women of Caledonia*.

IT would be no difficult matter to carry the parallel between the Germans and Caledonians much further. Those who have enquired with care into the primæval state of North Britain, will see the comparison in a much stronger light, upon perusing, with attention, that admirable treatise of Tacitus concerning Germany and its inhabitants. There is certainly a strong unifor-

In this passage Britain is personified by the poet; and is painted in the cheeks, and clad with a blue mantle in the Pictish manner. It is hardly possible to make sense of the words without taking them in this view.

* I have it from very good authority, that a large silver buckle, once worn by Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, was till of late in the possession of Macdougall, of Dunolly, a gentleman in Argyleshire. Bruce, after the fatal battle of Methven, found himself under the necessity of flying to the Highlands, attended by only a small band of trusty friends. Macdougall, of Lorn, one of the ancestors of the gentleman now mentioned, being in the English interest, attacked that illustrious Prince in his flight, and overpowered him with superior numbers. Bruce performed prodigies of valour, in a narrow pass where he posted himself singly till all his friends were out of danger; but he was forced at length to give way, and in his retreat lost his upper garment, or at least the buckle with which it was fastened. This scuffle in which Bruce was thus worsted, is sung by Barbour, an old Scottish bard.

mity between all nations in a barbarous state. The similarity must be much more apparent between nations originally sprung from the same source. But it evidently appears to any one acquainted with the early history of the Germans and Caledonians, that the conformity between them, in point of customs and national manners, is much more striking than between the Caledonians and Britons †. This seems greatly to favour the opinion of Tacitus, and the tradition preserved by Bede. But it must be confessed, that nothing decisive can be said on this head, though I intend to do all justice to the system of the supposed Germanic extraction of the Caledonians.

THE great objection against the system is, that as in that early period wherein North Britain was peopled, the art of building and navigating vessels must have been either totally unknown, or very imperfectly understood in Germany, it is much more probable that the first inhabitants of Caledonia came rather from the Southern division of the island, than from any part of the Northern continent, at the distance of several days sailing from any part of Britain *.

THIS indeed is a very plausible argument, and difficult to be obviated; at the same time it is not easy to ascertain the period of time in which the Germans could first venture to commit themselves, with safety, to the ocean.

† Sir William Temple.

* Innes, Crit. Essay, p. 71.

WE know from good authority, that the *Suiones* of Germany had very considerable fleets, either in the Baltic or in the Northern ocean, in Trajan's time *; of consequence it may be presumed, that they knew the art of building and navigating ships much earlier. The Teutones, who fought against Caius Marius, must have had some tolerable vessels to transport themselves and their families to Germany from the Northern parts of Scandinavia, when they went upon their celebrated expedition towards the South of Europe. This being the case, there is but little absurdity in supposing that the ancestors of the same Teutones, or of the *Suiones*, or of some other maritime nation in the Western part of Germany, might have ventured upon a voyage to North Britain, five or six hundred years, at least, before the *Suiones* made such a considerable figure at sea in the reign of Trajan. It does not appear that the Gauls understood sea affairs much sooner than the Germans. If the Phenicians made early voyages to the coast of Gaul, the same love of gain that carried them thither would have led them likewise to the maritime parts of Germany; and nothing could hinder the Allemans, any more than the Gauls, from learning the more simple branches of ship building and navigation.

It may indeed be said that the Gauls might have easily learned the art of building ships from the Phœceans of Mafilia, who were settled among them, and consequently might have understood sea affairs much

* Tacit. Lips. p. 450.

earlier than the Germans. But South Britain must have been peopled, if we can judge from appearances, before the Phocœans possessed themselves of the Massilian district of Gaul, an event which happened about five hundred years before the birth of Christ *.

WITHOUT admitting an early knowlege of navigation, it is difficult to account how the Belgic Gauls transported themselves into Britain. They certainly could not stow themselves, their wives, children, and cattle, in *Curachs*. They must, in short, have vessels of a larger and better construction. Should this be allowed, what could hinder the ancestors of those Saxons, Friesians, Normans, and Ostmans, who harraffed the Southern parts of Europe in after ages, from having vessels equally good with those of Gaul, or from making voyages into a country at the distance of a few days sailing? The Saxons infested the coast of Britain under the reign of Diocletian; and if we can give credit to Saxo Grammaticus, the Danes invaded Britain several ages before the Roman ensigns were displayed there. But be that as it will, it is certain that the maritime nations of Germany and Scandia were very bold adventurers at sea, before the Roman empire began to decline; and they may have been so much sooner, though the Greek and Roman histories are silent upon that head.

IF it should be said, that the first Belgic colonies made their way into Britain in *Curachs* or boats made

* Just. lib. xliii. c. 3.

of wicker and ox hides, it may be answered, that these *Curachs* must then have been considerably larger than those used for many ages by several barbarous nations upon rivers and narrow sounds. The Belgic colonies who transmigrated into Britain, had originally cattle to carry along with them in their transports: and there is no reason to believe that the ancient inhabitants of Brittany, Normandy, or Picardy, had more skill to build vessels fit for a national migration, or more courage to use them than the ancient inhabitants of Holland, Friesland, Westphalia, Saxony, or Denmark. It is true, the latter lay at a greater distance from Britain: but if the Britons of Lucan's time ventured out into the ocean in *Curachs**, the old Germans might have likewise done so. Should they even be too timid or unskilful to make at once a cross voyage to Caledonia, it was always in their power, after coasting the Belgic Gaul and South Britain, to arrive at last in the Northern division of this island.

FROM the parallel drawn between the Germans and Caledonians, and the observations I have made on the supposed state of navigation in those times, it must be owned that there is some additional strength given to Bede's tradition, and the remark of Tacitus. But after all, the Gaulish descent of the Caledonians is the most natural and the least liable to objections. In the obscurity which involves so early a period, probability must take place of all arguments drawn from the similarity

* Lucani Phars. lib. iv. ver. 130, et seq.

of manners and customs which invariably subsists among all barbarous nations; at the same time, I am actually of opinion, that the Caledonians and Germans descended originally from the same Gaulish stock.

THE Gauls who first possessed themselves of Britain, might easily, at the same time, send colonies beyond the Rhine. In a course of ages the inhabitants of Gaul, as they possessed a fine climate and soil, naturally formed themselves into regular governments and communities, and made a more rapid progress towards civilization than the Celto-Germanic colonies they sent beyond the Rhine, and which, from the nature of the country they possessed, must longer remain in a state of barbarity. In process of time the Gauls, no doubt, from an increase of numbers, sent successive colonies to Britain. The first colonists, from the pressure of those new comers, gradually migrated to the North, till at last they possessed themselves of the inaccessible mountains of Caledonia. There they not only found security to themselves but to their original customs and language, which, from the simplicity of a life spent in hunting, suffered very few innovations. The Northern Germans, certainly, from similar circumstances, gradually had moved towards the Baltic, and had the same opportunities of preserving the ancient customs and language once common to the great Celtic stock. Thus the resemblance between the old Germans and Caledonians is better accounted for, than from a deduction of the latter from the former in an after age.

As the Gauls, as I have above said, made a quicker progress towards civilization than their colonies in Britain, and beyond the Rhine, so their language and manners suffered a more rapid change. The arts of civil life introduce among mankind a new form of ideas, and of course new words and new manners. To this, and this alone, must be ascribed the difference between the Caledonians, and the Gauls and Britons of the South, in point of the construction of their language, and the diversity of a few national customs.



DISSERTATION XIII.

Of the Degrees and Titles of Honour among the Scots of the Middle Ages. Of obsolete Law Terms in Regiam Majestatem. Of the Merchetæ Mulierum.

THE Galic dialect of the old Celtic was the common language of the greatest part of Scotland, from time immemorial, down to the eleventh century. The Scots who lay to the South of Clyde and the Forth had, for several ages before the æra now assigned, a good deal of intercourse with the Saxons of Bernicia and Deira. That division of Scotland was, at intervals, subject to a Saxon government*. Some of the Scots Kings were Lords of Cumberland, before their accession to the throne, and kept their little courts in that part of England. From these circumstances we may conclude, that the Saxon tongue prevailed in the Southern division of North Britain for a considerable time before it crossed the Firth of Edinburgh, in its progress to the North.

* Bede.

TOGETHER with the language, customs and laws of the Saxons, Malcolm Canemore introduced Saxon or French titles of magistracy and honour, unknown till then in Scotland.

BEFORE that time North Britain, like other unpolished countries, may be supposed to have been very defective in its laws. Hector Boece, and some other Scottish historians, have given the world an abstract of some excellent laws made by Kenneth the Second and Macbeth: but their authority on this head is extremely questionable. There is another body of laws which are commonly attributed to Malcolm, the Second of that name, who in the year 1004 mounted the throne of Scotland: but our ablest antiquaries have been much divided on this subject. The learned Sir John Skene, and Sir James Dalrymple, are positive that these laws ought to be ascribed to Malcolm; but Dr. Nicolson, Bishop of Carlisle, Dr. Hickes, and before them, Sir Henry Spelman, contended for fixing them to a later period. I have thrown at the bottom of the page Spelman's own words*.

* “ Skene begins the laws of Scotland with those of Malcolm the Second. But it is far from being clear that the laws which go under that King's name are so ancient. They contain many words and terms which belong to a more modern age: besides, they refer to customs, and names of offices, which belong to a later period. Skene likewise attributes to David the First those four books which are intitled, *Regiam Majestatem Scotiæ*. This Monarch, according to his calculation, began to reign in the year of Christ 1124, or about the twenty-fourth of Henry the First. But Randolph de Glanville did not write his treatise concerning the laws and customs of England, till
after

MALCOLM MACKENNETH, or the second King of Scotland of that name, was cotemporary with Canute. He was long at war with the Danes and English; and it is not likely that he borrowed these titles of honour from either of those nations. It is much more probable that his great grandson Malcolm Canemore imported them from England. In the MacAlpine or MacKenneth laws mention is frequently made of

after the twenty-sixth of Henry the Second's reign, that is, not till the year 1180; and they who compare this book of Glanville's, and the *Regiam Majestatem* of Scotland, will readily find such an agreement and similitude in them, that they must conclude one of the two was copied after the other. But I allow others to determine whether we have imported our system of laws from Scotland."

"If it is impossible to prove that the feudal law was established in England before the Norman conquest, it is therefore far from being probable that the same feudal law was known in Scotland about sixty years before that epoch. However ancient the league between the French and the Scots may have been, it may be doubted whether Malcolm the Second had intercourse enough with that, or any other Continental nation, to learn the constitution of their government, or to know even their titles of dignity and honour, so as to transfer them into his own kingdom. It is hardly credible that he could have been the author of those laws which give exact descriptions of the offices of chancellor, justiciary chamberlain, steward of the household, constable, marischal, sheriff, provost, baillies of burghs, together with the privileges and jurisdiction of barons. "The Britons, says Cambden, disown the name of barons: nor is there any thing said with regard to it in the Saxon laws. The first mention of this title that I have met with, is in a fragment of the laws made by Canute the Great †." See Spelman's Glossary, under the words *Lex Scotorum*.

† Britannia, under the article, Degrees of England.

earls *, among the barons. Sir James Dalrymple infers from this circumstance, that we had that degree of honour in Scotland during Malcolm the second's reign †. But the argument is not conclusive, till it is admitted that that Monarch was the author of the MacAlpine laws; and if the ancient copy to which the learned knight appeals, be a sufficient authority to ascribe these laws to Malcolm Mac-Kenneth, the old tradition which attributes them to MacAlpin, is an argument equally good for making them much more ancient.

E A R L is originally a Danish word, which answers to Consul, Comes and Dux, of the Latin used in the middle ages ‡. Dalrymple infers, from two or three conclusive authorities, that we had Comites and Vice-comites in Scotland before the reign of Malcolm the Second §. But he allows that this title of dignity was not hereditarily annexed to families, till the time of Malcolm Canemore. The Scots historians accordingly tell us, that MacDuff, Thane of Fife, was the first that obtained the hereditary title of Earl to his family.

BUCHANAN || says, that there was no title of honour in Scotland superior to that of Knight, excepting those of the Thanes and Justiciaries, before the reign of Malcolm the Second. But it is not even certain that there were gentlemen of the *equestrian order* in

* Collections, p. 146.

† Comites.

‡ Spelm. Gloss. under the word Eorla.

§ Collect. p. 146.

|| Rer. Scot. lib. 6. cap. 52.

Scotland so early *. Cambden and Spelman suppose, that the origin of this dignity must be investigated among the ancient Germans. They quote the following passage from Tacitus : “ Among the Germans, it is never customary for any man to carry arms till the community have first given their approbation. That done, one of the principal nobility, or the young man’s father or relation, adorns him with a shield or javelin, before a public assembly. This ceremony confers the same dignity among them that the gown does among the Romans. Before their youth receive this honour, they are reckoned only a part of a private family ; but from that day forth they are considered as members of the commonwealth †.”

BEFORE the titles of Barons, Earls, Dukes, Marquisses and Viscounts were imported from foreign countries, all the degrees of honour known in Scotland were, as far as I can learn, the King, the Lord, the Tanist, and the Toshigh ; together with those belonging to offices, civil and ecclesiastical. Barons came in with the feudal law. The word Earl is of a Danish extract ; and the language of the Danes was unknown here till after the middle of the ninth century. Robert the Third created our first Dukes, and James the Sixth our Marquises, Viscounts and Baronets.

* We find no great mention of this order till Malcolm the Third’s time. Henry Fitz-Empress was sent from England to receive the honour of knighthood from David, the son of that Prince.

† Tacitus de mor. Germ. cap. 13.

THE ancient Scots or Highlanders call the sovereign *Ri* ; the old Britons or Welsh *Rhuy* ; the modern French *Roy* ; the Italians *Re* ; and the Spaniards *Rey*. From this similarity of sounds, and identity of sense, we may reasonably infer, that the *Rex* of the Latin is derived from the Celtic, and had originally the same idea affixed to it which is conveyed by the correspondent names in the several dialects of that language.

THE meaning of *Ri* is a ruler ; and among the ancients the idea of despotism was not annexed to regal government. This opinion only obtained in the East. The Celtic nations limited the regal authority to very narrow bounds. The old Monarchs of North Britain and Ireland were too weak, either to controul the pride and insolence of the great, or to restrain the licentiousness of the populace. Many of those Princes, if we credit history, were dethroned, and some of them even put to death by their subjects ; which is a demonstration that their power was extremely circumscribed. They were not in possession of treasures, to keep standing armies, or to corrupt those whose avarice might induce them to be instruments of tyranny.

NEXT to the King were those great landholders who are called *Lords* in English, *Lairds* in Scotch, and *Tierna* in the ancient Galic. It is very probable that the Galic *Tierna*, or the Welch *Teyrn*, was

the first title of supreme dignity among the Celtic nations *.

THE Highlanders and Irish frequently address the Supreme being under this name; and hence it may be concluded, that their ancestors had no conception of power superior to that of the *Tierna*. From the same consideration we may likewise infer, that originally every one called *Tierna* was an independent Prince. It was only after many such Lords had become the vassals of mightier Princes, that this name was given to persons in a state of subordination. As the Romans formed their *Rex* out of the Celtic word *Ri*, so the Greeks derived their *Τυραννος* from *Tierna*. The word Tyrant was originally no more odious, in the language of that nation, than King is in that of England. It were an easy matter to show that some excellent Princes were stiled Tyrants in Greece, and agreeable to that mode of expression in ancient times, Æneas gives the very same title to the good old Latinus.

THE third name of dignity among the Scots of ancient times was *Tanist*, or *Tanistear*. This word has been confounded with *Thane*, which occurs frequently in the history of Scotland. Buchanan says, that before the reign of Malcolm the Second, *Thane* was the

* *Tierna* is derived very probably from *Ti*, *The one*, by way of eminence, and *Ferran*, *Land*. *Ferran*, in the oblique case, produces *Eran*. So that *Tierna* is the same with *Tiëran*, *A man of land*, or *a great proprietor of land*.

highest title immediately after that of King. His explication of the word is, the Governor of a country, or the King's Lieutenant in a certain division of his dominions *. Every one conversant in the history of Scotland has read of Banquho, Thane of Lochaber, MacDuff, Thane of Fife, and Somerled, Thane of Argyle.

THE appellation of Thane was known in England, and common there for several ages: nor was it discontinued till after the Norman conquest. In the Saxon tongue, *Thane*, *Theger*, and *Tain*, signified a Servant or Minister †.

THE Irish had their *Tanist*; and in their language the meaning of that word is, the second person, or second thing ‡. It is not probable that they borrowed the title from the English, as, notwithstanding of Bede's allegation concerning the friendly disposition of the Irish towards the Saxons of the sixth and seventh centuries, they had a mortal aversion to the English; and before the conquest of Ireland by Henry the Second, the title of Tanist became obsolete: it may therefore be presumed that Tanist is an ancient Galic word.

IN the settlement of succession, the law of Tanistry prevailed in Ireland from the earliest accounts of

* *Præter Thanos hoc est præfectos Regionum.* Buchan. in *Milcolm.*

† *Spelman's Glossary*, under these words.

‡ See *Lhoyd's Irish Dictionary.*

time. “ According to that law, says Sir James Ware §, the hereditary right of succession was not maintained among the Princes or the Rulers of countries ; but the strongest, or he who had most followers, very often the eldest and most worthy of the deceased King’s blood and name, succeeded him. This person, by the common suffrage of the people, and in the lifetime of his predecessor, was appointed to succeed, and was called *Tanist*, that is to say, the second in dignity. Whoever received this dignity, maintained himself and followers, partly out of certain lands set apart for that purpose, but chiefly out of tributary impositions, which he exacted in an arbitrary manner ; impositions, from which the lands of the church only, and those of persons vested with particular immunities, were exempted.”

THE same custom was a fundamental law in Scotland for many ages. Upon the death of a King, the throne was not generally filled by his son, or daughter failing of male issue, but by his brother, uncle, cousin-german, or near relation of the same blood. The personal merit of the successor, the regard paid to the memory of his immediate ancestors, or his address in gaining a majority of the leading men, frequently advanced him to the crown, notwithstanding the precautions taken by his predecessor.

THE history of the Saxon heptarchy, or that of the English monarchy, down to the time of the conquest,

§ Antiq. and Hist. of Ireland, chap. 8.

shews, that the law of Tanistry was very often the rule observed in the succession of Sovereigns. No great regard was paid to hereditary right: the King's brother was frequently preferred to his son; a bastard Prince sometimes took place of a legitimate one; and the will of the last reigning Sovereign had more than once excluded the lineal heir.

It is plain that the law of Tanistry had a natural tendency to embroil families, countries and kingdoms. In all the places where it prevailed, domestic feuds, provincial insurrections, and national wars, must have been unavoidably frequent. But as the Scots and Irish, and almost every other Celtic nation, made arms the great occupation of life, they thought it highly inexpedient to intrust the direction of the state to infants, minors, or unexperienced youths. With them it was the most essential consideration to have a brave and disinterested Prince, who had been inured to war, and who could lead them into the field, inspire them with spirit, and support them with conduct. They considered the King at once as the subject and leader of the community.

IN Ireland the law of Tanistry not only determined the regal succession, but likewise extended to every great estate possessed by a subject. The Lord of every country, and the Chief of every *Sept* was succeeded, not by his son or next heir, but by the Tanist, who was elective, and who frequently procured his
3
election

election by force of arms *. In Scotland the case was much the same, till the establishment of the feudal law, and in some places long after that period.

IN the Highlands and Western Isles the Tierna's next brother claimed a third † part of the estate during life, by virtue of a right founded on an immemorial custom. It is not above two hundred years back since the Tanistry regulation, and the disputes consequent upon it, prevailed in the Highlands. There have been some instances of it much later.

TOSHICH was another title of honour which obtained among the Scots of the middle ages. Spelman imagined that this dignity was the same with that of the Thane ‡. But the Highlanders, among whose predecessors the word was once common, distinguish carefully in their language the *Toshich* from the *Tanistair*, or the *Tierna*. When they enumerate the different classes of their great men, agreeable to the language of former times, they make use of these three titles, in the same sentence, with a disjunctive adverb between them.

IN Galic, *Tus*, *Tos*, and *Toshich*, signify the *beginning*, or *the first part* of any thing, and sometimes the front of an army or battle §. Hence the name

* Sir John Davis's Histor. Relations of Ireland.

† Trian Tiernis.

‡ Spelm. Gloss. under the word Thane.

§ See Lhoyd's Irish Dictionary.

Tofhich *; that is to say, the General, or Leader of the van. The interpretation now given of the word

* The Moguls or Calmachs give the name of *Taisba* to their heads of tribes, and that of *Contaisba* to their Great Chan.—*Can* itself is the same with the *Cean* of the Galic, signifying *Head*, and metaphorically the head of a family; so that *Cantaisba*, or grand Chan, would be expressed by a Highlander *Cantoishich*. Here it is worthy to remark the connection between the old Mogul or Tartar language and the Celtic. This connection offers some kind of presumption that they sprung from the same original stock. The great river Oxus, called by the Tartars *Amu*, which, rising in mount Imaus, once discharged itself in the Caspian sea, but now, having changed its course, falls into the lake of *Aral*, naturally divides Asia into almost two equal parts. The Tartars, and some other Eastern nations, called that division which lies to the South-west *Iran*, that to the North-east *Turan*, which are plainly Celtic words. *Iran* is compounded of *Iar*, South-west, and *ran*, division; and *Turan*, in the same manner, is composed of the two words *Tua* and *ran*, which signify the Northern country or division. See *Abul Ghazi's Hist. of Tartary*, vol. ii. p. 541.

It were easy to pursue the similarity between the Tartar and Celtic languages much farther. I shall give one other instance. The great Zingis Chan, first Emperor of the Moguls, being one day hunting, and perceiving a solitary tree, exceeding tall and beautiful, he ordered his sons to inter him under it, after his death; which they accordingly executed with all the requisite ceremony. There grew, in time, such beautiful trees about the tomb, and in such numbers, that an arrow, shot from a bow, could hardly find a passage through them. From that circumstance, they have given to that place the name of *Barchan-Caldin*; and all the Princes of the posterity of Zingis Chan who since then died in those provinces, have been interred in the same place. *Barchen Caltin* is perfectly understood by every Scots Highlander: it signifies a beautiful thicket of birch and hazel trees.—*Hist. of Tartary*, vol. ii. p. 145.

Toslich is confirmed by the name of a considerable family in the Highlands of Scotland—the clan of M'Intosh, who say, that they derive their pedigree from the illustrious MacDuff, once Thane, and afterwards Earl of Fife. MacDuff, in consideration of his services to Malcolm Canemore, obtained a grant, which gave him and his heirs a right of leading the van of the royal army on every important occasion. The Chieftain of the clan that is descended from this great Earl is stiled *Mac in Toslich* in Galic, that is to say, the Son of the General.

OCHIERN, or Ogetharius, is another title of honour mentioned in the ancient laws of Scotland. Spelman, copying after Skene, says, that the *Ofchiern* is a person of the same dignity with a Thane's son; because, in the laws of Regiam Majestatem, the *marcheta* of a Thane's daughter is equal to the *marcheta* of an *Ochiern's* daughter*, as the *Cro* of a Thane was the same with that of an *Ochiern*. The word is undoubtedly a Galic one, contracted from *Oge-Thierna*, that is, the young Lord, or heir apparent of a landed gentleman. It is likewise not improbable that the Thane of our Regiam Majestatem is the Tanist, or the person who possessed the third part of a great Lord's estate†.

THE *Brehon*, or *Brithibh*, may be ranked, without any impropriety, among the old Scottish titles of

* Two kids, or twelve pennies.

† Ogetharius is derived from *Oig-thear*, that is, a young gentleman.

honour.

honour. The Brehons were, in North Britain and Ireland, the Judges appointed by authority to determine, on stated times, all the controversies which happened within their respective districts. Their courts were usually held on the side of a hill, where they were seated on green banks of earth. These hills were called mute hills. It may be presumed that the Brehons were far from being deeply skilled in the intricate science of the law, which they professed. By conversing with the ecclesiastics in their neighbourhood, they learned some scraps of the canon law, but knew little or nothing of the civil. The customs which prevailed in the land wherein they lived, and the opinion of the times, were generally their rules of decision. The office belonged to certain families, and was transmitted, like every other inheritance, from father to son. Their stated salaries were farms of considerable value.

By the *Brehon* law even the most atrocious offenders were not punished with death, imprisonment, or exile, but were obliged to pay a fine, called *Eric*. The eleventh or twelfth part of this fine fell to the Judge's share: the remainder belonged partly to the King, or Superior of the land, and partly to the person injured; or if killed, to his relations.

WE learn from Tacitus, that the same custom prevailed among the ancient Germans. After he had observed that they hanged traitors and deserters on trees, and that persons, either cowardly, or infamous

for impurity, were drowned in miry lakes, he adds, "Men guilty of crimes less scandalous, were, upon conviction, fined in a number of cattle. A part of this fine was paid to the King or commonwealth, and another portion of it was given to the person injured, or to his nearest friends."

IN Scotland the same custom prevailed, till within three or four hundred years ago, and in some divisions of it much later. In our laws of Regiam Majestatem, we find it enacted, That one who, riding through a town, rides over and kills any of the inhabitants, is to pay a proper ransom, no less than if he had wilfully destroyed him*. The name given to the ransom in the law is *Cro* and *Galmes*. The *Cro* of every man is ascertained, in the same institutes, according to his quality or birth. The *Cro* of an Earl is one hundred and forty cows. The *Cro* of an Earl's son, or Thane, is an hundred cows. The *Cro* of a plebeian, or *villain*, is sixteen. The *Cro*, *Galmes* and *Enach* of all other ranks and orders of men are particularly defined in those laws.

SPELMAN has judiciously remarked, that these three barbarous words are of Irish extraction. But he did not recollect that the Galic of Scotland was much the same with the language of Ireland, and that the words were originally British. They certainly had once a place in the law of Scotland, though their true meaning has not been yet settled. The wealth of the ancient Scots, especially towards the North,

* Regiam Majest. lib. 4. cap. 24.

consisted solely in cattle. In the language spoken there, *Cro* signifies Cows, and *Croo* a sheepfold or Cow-pen. Agreeable to this explication of these two terms, a murderer is ordered by our old laws to pay the *Cro* of the person whom he had killed, that is, to pay the stated equivalent for his life, in cattle taken out of the slayer's pen or fold.

GALMES is a Galic word, and means a Pledge, or Compensation for any thing that is carried away or destroyed *. In the same language, *Enach* stands sometimes for the English word Bounty, and sometimes for an Estimate or Ransom.

CRO, *Galmes* and *Enach* are perhaps synonymous terms, according to the common language of the Scottish law, which is full of such tautological expressions. If there is any real difference between these words in the case before us, they signify three distinct fines; one payable to the King, or Superior of the person slain; another to his children; and a third to his *Cinea*, or the tribe to which he belonged. Agreeable to this distinction of fines, the old Saxons of England obliged murderers to pay three different ransoms, the *Fredum* to the King, the *Wergelt* to his family, and the *Linebote* to his kinsmen †.

KELCHYN is another term in the old Scottish law, to express a mulct due by one guilty of manslaughter.

* *Gial*, in the Galic, is a Pledge, and *Meas* an Estimate.

† See Spelman, under these words.

In our Regiam Majestatem *, the *Kelchyn* of an Earl is sixty-six cows and two thirds ; the *Kelchyn* of an Earl's son, or of a Thane, is forty-four cows, twenty-one pence, and two thirds of an obulus or bodle ; the *Kelchyn* of a Thane's son is by a fourth part less than that of his father ; and the law adds, that a *fwain*, or person of low degree, is to have no share of the *Kelchyn*.

THE learned Sir John Skene observes, that in the ancient language of Scotland, *Gailchen* signifies a pecuniary mulct, to which one is made liable, for a fault or crime. Spelman differs from him only so far as to think the word an Irish one. Skene's conjecture is partly just, and partly otherwise. The *Kelchyn* was a mulct, but not always a pecuniary one, nor payable for every fault or crime. We see the *Kelchyn* of an Earl is sixty-six cows, and two thirds of a cow. This fine belonged to the kinsmen of the person killed †, but to those only of principal note among them.

IN the old Scottish law, with regard to the fine paid by the murderer of an Earl, this *Croo* is declared to be one hundred and forty cows, and every cow priced at three *Oræ*. In a law of Canute the Great, quoted by Spelman ‡, fifteen *Oræ*, or *Horæ*, are made equal to a pound : and supposing the English pound of those

* Reg. Majest. lib. 4. cap. 38.

† *Kelchyn* signifies, paid to one's kinsmen, and is derived from *Gial* and *Cinneá*.

‡ In voc. *Ora*.

days to have been twelve times as much as the Scottish one, and the Oræ of both nations the same, the pecuniary value of one cow would have been about five shillings sterling. But should one suppose that the Ora of North Britain was to that of the Southern division, what the pounds, shillings and pence of the former are to those of the latter; the price of a cow in Scotland was, at the time of compiling the Regiam Majestatem, proportionably low.

It is certain that money was extremely scarce in Scotland during the reign of King David the First. But as we cannot well imagine that a full grown cow was sold for the small trifle of five-pence in that period, and as it is not in any degree probable that the price of it could have risen to five shillings sterling, we have here one proof, together with many more, from which it may be evinced, that the laws of Regiam Majestatem were framed in the time of David the Second, and not in the days of the first Scottish King of that name.

In that part of Regiam Majestatem which ascertains the different Merchetæ Mulierum, the Vacca, or large Cow, is valued at six solidi, or shillings. The real amount of that solidus cannot well be determined. If an English one, the price of a cow is considerably greater than the estimate already given: if a Scottish, it sinks down to a small matter.

As I have entered upon the explication of law terms, it is proper to give some solution of one of them, which,

which, as it is now understood, leaves a reproach upon our ancestors. The meaning of *Merchetæ Mulierum* is, according to some, founded upon a custom which did great dishonour to the ancient civil government of Scotland.

SOME of our best historians give the following account of the introduction of the *Merchetæ Mulierum* among the ancient Scots. Evenus the Third, a King of Scotland, cotemporary with Augustus, made a law, by which he and his successors in the throne were authorized to lie with every bride, if a woman of quality, before her husband could approach her: and in consequence of this law, the great men of the nation had a power of the same kind over the brides of their vassals and servants. We are told further by the same grave and learned historians, that this law was strictly observed throughout the kingdom; nor was it discontinued or repealed, till after a revolution of more than ten whole centuries. It was near the end of the eleventh age, that the importunities of St. Margaret prevailed with her husband, Malcolm Canemore, to abolish this unjustifiable custom. From that time forward, instead of the scandalous liberty given to every Superior by virtue of Evenus's law, the vassal or servant was impowered to redeem the first night of his bride by paying a tax in money*. This tax was called *Merchetæ Mulierum*.

I KNOW not whether any one has been hitherto sceptical enough to call the truth of this tale in

* Boece says a merk of silver, Buchanan half a merk.

question,

question, though it wears the face of absurdity and fable. Twenty moral demonstrations conspire in rendering it absolutely incredible.

EVENUS, the supposed author of the law, is no more than an imaginary being. Boece and Buchanan, with all their historical knowledge and industry, knew just as little concerning the Princes of Caledonia, coeval with Augustus, and of the laws established by them, as the other learned men of Europe knew with regard to the Emperors of Mexico before the time of Fernando Cortez.

It is impossible to prove that any considerable division of Caledonia was governed by a single Monarch in the Augustan age. But were it true that the case was otherwise, and also certain that Evenus reigned in the Western parts of North Britain in that very epoch, it is not credible that the Scots of that age would have granted so very extravagant a prerogative to their King, or so very uncommon a privilege to their nobility. In those early times men were too fierce and intractable to crouch under a burden so insupportable. To a people of spirit, a total extinction of freedom and property, in every other instance, would have been a much easier yoke than the slavery, oppression and disgrace attending so very shocking a prostitution of their wives, daughters and kinswomen. But had even the lower people of Scotland been the most abject of all slaves, and uncommon patterns of passive obedience, it cannot be supposed that all

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the nobility, from age to age, would have practised the doctrine of non-resistance, in such an amazing degree of perfection, as to permit their Sovereign to violate their honour in so heinous a manner. We know that many Princes, besides Tarquin, were dethroned, banished, and cut to pieces, for attempting the chastity of women. And we may safely affirm, that the most despotic King or Sultan in the East would fall a sacrifice, should he endeavour to establish the law of Evenus in that country, which has always been the scene of the severest exertion of arbitrary power.

SOME may say, that the manners and opinions of men are greatly changed. But human nature was always, and will ever continue the same, in the matter now under consideration. In vain will it be said, that the Scots, through a long habit, became reconciled to this ignominious custom. The Scots certainly were not more passive than the other brave nations of the world: and the history of mankind does not exhibit a single instance of such brutal insensibility in any nation.

THE satyrical Gildas, who had entertained the most violent prejudices against the Scots, would not have omitted such an opportunity of declaiming against them, with his usual acrimony. Bede himself, though a writer of much greater humanity and moderation, would not have overlooked so remarkable a part of their character, especially as he impeaches them,

more than once, of other immoralities. It would have been more to his honour to have animadverted severely on so flagitious a practice, than to arraign them so frequently of heterodoxy, for a pretended error in the trivial affair of Easter.

IF we consider the jealousy natural to women, it is highly improbable that the Queen of Malcolm Canemore was the first royal consort in Scotland that would have solicited her husband for a repeal of this infamous law. In the course of more than a thousand years, which intervened between the pretended Evenus and Malcolm, there were no doubt many Queens whose influence with their husbands might have abrogated this lascivious institution.—The story altogether wears such a face of improbability, that it is astonishing how it ever became the subject of tradition itself, and much more that it has received the sanction of historians.

It is however certain that the *Merchetæ Mulierum* were once paid in Scotland, and authorized by law. But this imposition was not peculiar to that kingdom. The *Merchetæ Mulierum* were, properly speaking, pecuniary fines, paid by the vassal and servant to his lord and master, upon the marriage of his daughter, or paid by a widow upon a reiteration of nuptials: and this custom obtained in every part of Britain, though with some variation.

I CANNOT determine whether the brides of England or Wales were liable to this tax before the conquest;

but in the reign of William the Norman they certainly were. “A woman, saith Domesday book, in whatever way she came by a husband, gave twenty shillings to the King, if a widow; but if a maid, ten only *.” That the grievance arising from this hard law was universal, or at least very general, may be justly concluded from different articles of the charter granted by Henry the First, and from the famous Magna Charta of King John.

IN the fourth article of Henry’s charter are the following words: “If any one of the Barons, or of the other vassals that hold immediately of me, shall incline to give his daughter, sister, niece or kinswoman in marriage, let him speak to me on that subject: but neither shall I take or receive any thing from him for a marriage licence, nor shall I hinder him from disposing of the woman as he pleases, unless he bestow her on my enemy †.”

FROM the immunity given in these words; and from the preamble of the charter, one may naturally infer, that the law of the Merchetæ had formerly prevailed in every part of England, excepting the single county of Kent. After King John had given the great charter of liberties to the Barons, and after that inestimable right had been confirmed by his son, grandson, and great grandson, we find, that not only villains, or the lowest class of people in England, were obliged to pay this fine, but those too who held

* Spelman in voc. Maritag.

† Math. Paris, p. 55.

their lands in free foccage *. The fine was called Merchetum or Maritagium there, as it went under the name of Mercheta in Scotland.

It can scarcely be doubted that the feudal institutions of Scotland came originally from England. The general spirit of the feudal laws, and the manner in which they are expressed, afford almost a demonstration on that head. Malcolm Canemore had lived long in England, and owed very great obligations to that country. His Queen was a Saxon Princess, and English exiles were the great favourites of both. Malcolm's children had an English education; and after that period of time, the English language, the English system of religion, the English dress, and the English law, became fashionable in Scotland. Hence it may be inferred, that the old Scots stood obliged to their neighbours for the Merchetæ Mulierum, and not to Evenus, their ideal King.

We have no cause to believe, whatever our historians affirm on that head, that Queen Margaret eased the Scots from this oppressive tax. In Regiam Majestatem; the Merchetæ payable by an Earl's daughter is no less than twelve cows, and was a perquisite which belonged to the Queen. The Merchetæ due by a Thane's daughter fell to the Superior, and was no more than a single cow, and twelve pence, which fell to the collector's share. The Merchetæ of every woman, whether virgin or widow, is determined by our oldest institutes, and the fine payable to the Queen was by far the most considerable.

* Spelman in voc. Soke manerio.

It is very evident that Boece and Buchanan mistook the origin and true meaning of the Merchetæ. According to the former, a Mark of silver was the compensation demanded by Malcolm Canemore for the first night of the bride; a privilege to which he and his nobles had an equal right. But according to Buchanan, the very half of that pecuniary tax was all that could be required, or was given. It is strange enough that these two authors could have differed so widely in this matter; and it is equally so, that they imagined the same sum precisely was exacted from every woman, whether of high or low rank, and whether a maid or a widow. From this circumstance it may be justly concluded, that neither of these historians examined the old laws of their country*.

* With regard to the etymon of the word Mercheta, or Merchetum, none could be more improper than that offered by our learned countryman Skene. It carries indeed too much immodesty in it to be laid before any delicate reader. It is very probable that the tax under consideration was paid in England before it was imposed in Scotland. We should therefore look out for the true etymon of the Mercheta in England. The Merchetum was surely a pecuniary fine, and amounted at first to a Mark. Those who have studied the history of ancient coins know very well that Marks of silver and gold bore very different values in different countries, ages and nations†. The English Mark consisted of thirteen shillings and four-pence sterling. The Mark of Scotland was no more than a twelfth part of that sum. The Burgundian ounce was the eighth part of a Mark; and a Scottish Mark was just an ounce. The Danish Mark seems to have been equivalent to two denarii, or two-pence; and in some countries the Mark was equal to eight ounces. In short, whatever the original amount of the Merchetum may have been, in all probability its etymon must be *Marca*, *Marcha*, or *Marchata*, three words of the very same meaning.

† See Spelman, under the word *Marca*.

DISSERTATION XIV.

Of the Bards.

A MODERN writer of some eminence has attempted to prove that religion was the true source of poetry. According to him, it was very natural for a person who possessed a warm imagination and a good heart, after contemplating the marvellous works of that Great Being who is the Creator and Sovereign Lord of the universe, to feel the strongest emotions of admiration, gratitude and love. Filled with the idea of this grand object, he would soon endeavour to express the awful impression he felt in language. Words falling short of his conceptions, he would strive to supply that want with the tuneful sounds of some musical instrument. Delighted with the harmony of agreeable sounds, he would exert his whole strength in adding to his vocal praises the same numbers, measure, and cadence, which had been expressed by the action of his hands, in playing on the instrument*.

WE are told by the most ancient of all historians, that the harp and organ were known in a very early

* Rollin, Bell. Let. Vol. I. book ii. art. 1.

period, and it is natural to think that there had been some poetical compositions before Tubal invented those instruments. Vocal music was certainly prior to the invention of instruments of music. There is no reason therefore to suppose but the numbers, measures, and cadence of verse, were known before words were adapted to the tone of an instrument.

THE most ancient specimens of poetry now remaining were dedicated to the honour of the divinity. The two songs of Moses, and that of Deborah, are entirely in that strain. The praises bestowed on men and women in the latter are introduced episodically, and have a manifest reference to the main subject. The lamentation of David over Saul and Jonathan is in a different stile. Religion has little or no concern in it. The heroic exploits and untimely fate of these two great Princes make the whole burden of that song.

WE may take it for granted, that the art of versification was known and much practised before Moses wrote his triumphal ode. But whether the first poetical essay was employed in the service of God, or in honour of some great man or wonderful natural object, it is impossible to say. Poetry is the triumphant voice of joy or the broken sighs of sorrow and melancholy. The extremes of those passions are most violent in the earliest stage of society. Before the faculties of the human mind are regulated by advanced civilization, the feelings of the heart are strong: and strong feelings always produce that sublimity of expression which

we

we call poetry. The variety of the life of the savage affords him opportunities of viewing natural objects in their most awful and striking form; therefore even his common conversations are expressive of the deep impressions of his mind, and his language is metaphorical and strong. In advanced society, the cultivated state of the mind gives rise to abstracted ideas, which are too jejune and ill understood to constitute that sublimity of expression which is so remarkable in the poetical compositions of early ages.

THE poets of the Celtic nations were universally called bards by antient writers. The bards celebrated in verse the great actions of heroes, and men of high dignity and renown. Without encroaching on the province of another order of men, they could not employ their genius on religious subjects.

A PASSAGE of Ammianus Marcellinus deserves our attention. “After the inhabitants of Gaul, says he, “had been gradually polished out of their original “barbarity, the study of some valuable branches of “learning made a considerable progress among them. “The Bards, Eubates, and Druids, gave birth to that “study.

“It was the business of the bards to sing the brave “actions of illustrious men in heroic song, and their “poems on these subjects were accompanied by the “sweet modulations of the lyre. The Eubates made “deep researches into the noblest and most sublime

D d

“ properties

“ properties of nature : and they endeavoured to
 “ express their speculations on that subject in verse.
 “ But the Druids, men of a more elevated genius, and
 “ formed into societies agreeable to the rules laid down
 “ by Pythagoras, acquire the highest pitch of honour
 “ by their enquiries into things sublime and unknown,
 “ and, despising all that belongs to the human race
 “ in this lower world, they made no difficulty of
 “ affirming that souls are immortal*.”

MANY learned writers among the moderns have been of opinion that the Druids, Eubates and Bards, were three different orders of priests. But it requires a clearer proof than ancient history can furnish, to shew that the Bards took any greater concern in spiritual affairs than the laity of their country.

* Per hæc loca hominibus paulatim excultis, viguere studia laudabilium doctrinarum, inchoata per Bardos et Euhages et Druidas : et Bardi quidem fortia virorum illustrium facta, heroicis composita versibus, cum dulcibus lyræ modulis cantitarunt : Euhages vero scrutantes summa et sublimia naturæ pandere conabantur. Inter hos Druidæ ingeniis celsiores, ut auctoritas Pythagoræ decrevit, sodalitiis astricti consortiis quæstionibus occultarum rerum altarumque erecti sunt ; et despectantes humana pronuntiarunt, animas immortales. Ammian. lib. xv. circa finem.

I have taken the liberty of translating our author's *pandere*, to express in verse. *Pandere* is a poetical word, and though sometimes found in prose writers, is never used in a prosaic stile. In the sense of that word now under consideration it almost always conveys the idea of a pomp of diction, and a harmony of numbers.

It is plain from Strabo's testimony*, that the Eubates were priests and much employed in phisiological disquisitions. But unless we suppose that they published poetical compositions on religious subjects, it is difficult to know how to distinguish them from the Druids in the preceding passage of Ammianus. The Druids composed in verse, but never published any of their compositions.

Οὔαταις, *Vates*, *Eubates*, *Euhages*, and *Eubages*, are words of exactly the same meaning, and diversified only in the orthography by the vicious pronounciation of original authors, or the blunders of transcribers. Those to whom the name belonged were a Celtic order of priests, philosophers, and poets, thought to have been prophetically inspired. Though the office is no more, the title has been hitherto preserved in the name of an Irish tribe, and in that of a Scottish clan, once considerable, and not yet extinct †.

LUCAN

* Lib. iv. p. 302.

† Among the old Irish families of note in the county of Mayo, Cambden reckons that of MacVadus*, and in the Western Isles of Scotland are some called MacFaid. In the Galic and Irish languages, *Faid* signified a Prophet †.

As the Hibernian and Hebridian Scots had clans among them who drew their origin and appellation from some eminent *Faids* or prophetical poets, so they had others who derived their pedigree from Bards famous in their day. Every one belonging to the clans descended from these, was, after his poetical ancestor, denominated *Mac-i-Bhaird*,

* Hib. Com. Maio.

† Lhoyd's Irish and English Dictionary.

LUCAN has identified the Vates and the Bard *: but he is the only classical writer who has confounded these two names together. Virgil, Horace, Tibullus, Propertius, Ovid, and others, speak of the Vates with great respect, and have given that title to themselves, as well as to the most eminent poets of Greece; but not one of them has thought of doing the same honour to the more ignoble race of Bards.

THE poet and prophet are congenial souls. Their professions are nearly allied. The claim to supernatural inspiration is common to both: and certainly without a large portion of enthusiasm, taking that word in its original sense, neither of them could succeed so well as they have done. The conceptions of both rise to the grand, marvellous, and pathetic; their language is strong, animated, magnificent, full of tropes, and every way removed from prosaic diction. As it is the prophet's business to utter predictions, so the poet assumes the same character occasionally, and asserts that he speaks the language of the Gods.

It was for this reason that the Romans gave the name of Vates indiscriminately to prophets and poets. This emphatical word, like many more, they bor-

that is to say, the son of the Bard; and according to the genius of the Saxon language, which generally substitutes the German W in place of the Celtic Bh, the Mac-i-Bhairs go under the name of Ward, in the South of Scotland; and some parts of England, the Mac being rejected.

* Lib. i. ver. 247, &c.

rowed from the old Celtic. The Vates of Gaul certainly exercised the sacerdotal function. Strabo says so expressly in the place to which I have already referred. Ammianus informs us, that the Vates was a poet of superior dignity to the Bard. This opinion of Ammianus is strengthened by the authority of Virgil.

QUINTILIAN remarks, that Virgil was peculiarly fond of old words, when proper and expressive. This admirable poet was born and educated in the Cisalpine Gaul. He therefore must have been much better acquainted with the Celtic language than any writer of his time. But be that as it will, it is plain that he makes a distinction between the Bard and the Vates. In his ninth eclogue, Lycidas confesses, or rather boasts a little, that he himself was a poet, and a poet not of his own making, but one formed by the muses, at the same time he had too much modesty to imagine that he had a right to the name of Vates, though the shepherds were pleased to honour him with that title.

“ Incipe si quid habes : et me fecere *poetam* .

“ Pierides, sunt et mihi carmina : me quoque dicunt

“ Vatem pastores, sed non ego credulus illis :

“ Nam neque adhuc Varo videor nec dicere Cinna.

“ Digna, sed argutos interstrepere anser olores *.”

SERVIVS, and some other commentators of great reputation, have done a manifest injury to this passage. Dr. Martin, after having given a long and learned note on it, concludes that the proper signification of

*. Virg. Eclog. ix. ver. 32, &c.

Vates is, a poet of the first rank, a master of the art, and one that is really inspired. He had said before that *Vates* seems to be an appellation of greater dignity than *Poeta*, and to answer to the Bard of the English. In this last opinion he has been followed by another learned translator.

IF I understand the English language, Bard is not a title of greater dignity than poet; notwithstanding two eminent English writers are of that opinion. The title of Bard, no doubt, is sometimes given to men deservedly celebrated for their poetical genius; but the present mode of expression seems to have affixed an idea of contempt to that name. But in whatever degree of esteem the name of Bard is or may have been held, it is certain that Vates never lost its original dignity.

SOME Celtic Bards treated, it is true, of theological subjects in their compositions. We are told by Tacitus*, that "the Germans celebrated Tuisto, an earth-born God, and his son Mannus, in poems of great antiquity." He adds, a little after, that the same nation had poems of a very different strain; poems calculated solely for inspiring their warriors with courage in action. Those martial songs were of the composition of the Bards, as appears from the name of Barditus, which was given to that species of poetry. This name was borrowed from the Germans themselves. Tacitus does not say that the religious poems of the Germans

* Tacit. de mor. Germ. cap. 2.

were the productions of the Bards. The contrary is rather insinuated. These theological pieces were the work of a more venerable race of men, of the Eubates of Marcellinus, who investigated the most mysterious arcana of nature.

THE Eubates or the Vates of Strabo were the disciples of the Druids ; and it is not improbable that the Vates composed the numerous poems which those great teachers of all the Celtic nations communicated to their followers *.

THE translator of the poems of Ossian has in a great measure explained the reason that there are no traces of religion to be found in the works of that illustrious Bard. To the arguments produced by that ingenious gentleman I beg leave to add one more, which rises naturally from the observations I have just made on the subject. Though all the Celtic nations were in a manner full of Gods and superstition, their Bards could not employ their genius in the service of any divinity without going out of their own proper sphere. Heavenly themes belonged to the Vates, another order of men, of a more dignified and sacred character.

THOUGH religion is an universal concern, yet in every age and country there were persons set apart whose more peculiar business it was to praise and address the divinity. According to the Christian system, every one is under an obligation to celebrate their creator, though there is an order of men whose more

* Cæsar de Bell. Gall. lib. vi. cap. 14.

immediate employ it is to deal in matters of religion. The old Celtic nations did not so much take the business off the hands of the priest as we do: the *Faids* or Vates had no competitors in the province of theology. The Bard sung merely mortal subjects: hymns and anthems belonged solely to the more dignified race of *Faids*. Ossian, therefore, though one of the first men of the state, could not, such were the prejudices of those times, interfere with religious subjects, without a manifest breach on the peculiar privileges of that branch of the Druids called the Vates. It is to this cause, and not to the extinction of the Druids, I attribute the total silence concerning religion in the poems of Ossian. Religious enthusiasm, of whatever kind it is, takes too much hold of the human mind ever to be eradicated; and it may be safely affirmed, that it is a prejudice impossible to be removed, even by the severest exertions of power*.

IT

* The learned dissertator might have added, that nothing is capable of removing one religious enthusiasm, but the superior absurdity of another system of the same kind, or an immediate revelation from heaven. The feeble ray of reason can never dispel that haziness which superstition has naturally thrown over the human mind. Accustomed to look through this gross atmosphere, our ideas of supernatural things are strangely magnified and confused, and our distempered dreams, on that subject, make deeper and more permanent impressions than any material objects can do. If in an age when we can bring the wisdom of former times to the aid of reason and philosophy, we are almost incapable of divesting true religion of the trappings of superstition, it is much more improbable, that, in a barbarous period, the human mind could extricate itself from the chains of superstitious fanaticism. Dr. Macpherson, therefore, has accounted better for the silence concerning religion

It is idle to attempt to investigate the etymon of Bard. Nothing can be more trivial than the opinion of those who derive it from Bardus, an imaginary King, who, according to Berofus, reigned over the Gauls and Britains, and was the inventor of poetry. Bard is undoubtedly Celtic; and being a monosyllable it is vain to hope to trace it to any root.

A CERTAIN modern historian is of opinion, that it was from the ignorance of the old Celtic nations, and their contempt of letters, originally rose the Bardish compositions of Europe. It is certain that poetry had a great reputation among the Celtic nations, long before they

religion in the poems of Ossian, than the translator has done, by the supposed extinction of the Druids.

It is certain, that several tribes of American Indians have apparently no signs of religious superstition among them. This neither proceeds from gross ignorance nor from the refinements of philosophy; for the first has been always known to create more systems of enthusiasm than the scepticism of the latter has been ever able to destroy. It must be ascribed to the serenity and unchangeableness of the climate of the more inland and Southern parts of North America, which preserves an equal disposition of mind among the natives, not subject to the sudden reverses of joy and melancholy, so common under a more variable sky. Superstition delights to dwell in the fogs of islands, the mist of mountains, and the gross vapors of a fenny country. These circumstances throw a melancholy over the mind that is very productive of vain and supernatural fears and panics. It was from this cause, perhaps, that Britain was anciently the principal seat of Druidical superstitions; and on the same account, though from other circumstances, it now possesses true religion in its purity, it will, in a course of ages, revert to that gloomy enthusiasm so suitable to its moist air and variable climate.

knew the use of letters. It is even probable that poetry was known to the Celtes before their transmigration from Asia into Europe. We are to look for the origin of poesy much farther back than that ignorance and contempt of letters which prevailed among the European Celtes, after they became great nations, and objects of attention to Greece and Rome.

IN Gaul the Bards were held in great esteem. They had contributed greatly to polish that nation out of its primæval barbarity. The Spaniards also, and more especially the Celtiberians, had the same high respect for that order of men: nor is it improbable that those old poetical compositions, of which the *Turdetans* boasted so much, were the works of their Bards*. Ancient Germany had the greatest veneration for her Bards. Poetical records were the only annals known in that extensive country, and in them only the actions of great men were transmitted from generation to generation. Those oral chronicles prevailed over all that country through many ages. Charles the Great found barbarous poems of very high antiquity among his German subjects, and ordered copies of them to be made†. The German Saxons of a later age could not be perfectly reconciled to Christianity till the Holy Scriptures were rendered into verse, such

* Strabo, lib. iii. p. 204. Edit. Amstet.

† *Barbara et antiquissima carmina, quibus veterum regum actus et bella canebantur scripsit, memoriæque mandavit.* He calls them *Barbara*, because they were written in a language which he did not understand. Eginhard, in *Vita Car. Mag.* c. 29.

a permanent hold had their prejudice in favour of the Bards taken of their minds.

THE Northern Europe had the same profound respect for its Scalds, so poets were called in Scandinavia. The Scalds were the sole recorders of great events. The Danes and Norwegians have no records older than the twelfth century, and the Swedes fall even short of the Danes in the antiquity of their writers of history *. Saxo Grammaticus, who flourished in that age, has frequent recourse to the authority of the Scalds who preceded that æra; and Joannes Magnus, archbishop of Upsal, appeals to them continually in his history of the Goths.

TORFÆUS relates that the Scalds were accounted persons of very considerable importance in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. They were retained by monarchs, were invested with extraordinary privileges, and highly carested. In the court of that great Norwegian monarch, Harald Harfager, they had the honour of sitting next to the King himself, every one of the order according to his dignity. If we can depend on the authority of Saxo, Harnius gained the crown of Denmark by the strength of his poetical abilities: an illustrious person of this profession was in the same country exalted to a matrimonial alliance with one of its Princes †.

THE *Kymri* of Britain were remarkably fond of Bards. Every one of their Princes had his laureate; nor

* Torfæus, in Orcad. præfat.

† Idem, ibidem.

could any man of quality support the dignity of his rank, without having one of that faculty near his person. From the vast number of poetical manuscripts written in their native tongue, which the Welsh have hitherto preserved; it may be concluded that poetry was in very high estimation among their ancestors *.

AMONG the ancient Cambro-Britannic Bards, Taliesin and Lhyvarch held the first place for the felicity of their poetical genius. They flourished in the sixth century, and a considerable part of their productions is to this day extant. Taliesin was cotemporary with the great Maglocunnus, and was highly favoured by that Prince. He was dignified by his countrymen with the title of *Ben-Bairdhe*, or the chief of the Bards.

It is needless to prove that the Irish had the greatest value for poetry. Never did any nation encourage or indulge the profession of Bards with a more friendly partiality. Their nobility and gentry, their Kings, both provincial and supreme, patronized, caressed, and revered them. The Bards of a distinguished character had estates in land settled on themselves and their posterity. Even amidst all the ravages and excesses of war, these lands were not to be touched, the poet's own person was sacred, and his house was esteemed a sanctuary.

EVERY principal Bard was in the Irish tongue called *Filea* or *Allamb Redan*, that is to say, a *Doctor in Poetry*.

* Tit. vii. p. 239.

Each of the great Fileas or Graduates had thirty Bards of inferior note constantly about his person, and every Bard of the second class was attended by a retinue of fifteen poetical disciples.

If any faith can be given to Keating, many other extraordinary advantages and immunities were annexed to the office of Bard, besides those which arose from the extravagant munificence of private persons. It was ordained by law that all Bards should live at the public expence for six months in the year. By the authority of this law they quartered themselves upon the people throughout the island from Allhallow tide till May*. This heavy annual tribute was of a very old standing, and for that reason the Bards who were authorized to exact it, were in the language of the country called *Clear-ben-chainé*, that is, the songsters of the ancient tax.

THE very ample privileges conferred on the Bards, and the blind respect paid to their persons, made them at last intolerably insolent. Their avarice also kept pace with their pride. Their haughty behaviour and endless exactions became an insupportable grievance to the nation. The numbers of those strollers increased daily. Such as inclined to spend their time in idleness and luxury joined themselves to the fraternity, and passed under the character of Bards. In the reign of *Hugh ain Mearach*, says Keating, that is, in the latter end of the sixth age, a third part of the people of Ire-

* Keat. Gen. Hist. of Ireland, Part ii. pages 25, 26.

land went under that title, and claimed the privileges annexed to the order.

It is a just observation of Claudian, that every one who performs actions worthy of being celebrated by the muse, is always smitten with the love of song. The fame of the hero will soon die, unless preserved by the historian, or immortalized by the productions of the poet. Barbarous times have produced very few tolerable historians; but all ages indiscriminately, and all countries where military merit subsisted with a conspicuous lustre, have produced Bards famous in their generation.

THE ancient inhabitants of Caledonia were very warlike, and of course fond of fame. Such as had remarkably signalized themselves in the defence of their country, were, no doubt, proud of patronizing the best Bards of the times in which they lived. Camden's immense erudition has discovered that Galgacus was celebrated by the poets of South Britain *; and therefore it is likely he was highly extolled by the Bards of his own country. We are told by Tacitus that Arminius, the great deliverer of Germany, was in his own time sung by the Bards †. Every Celtic nation took care to perpetuate the memory of all their patriot heroes in their poetical annals. The laureates, if I may call them so, of every community were obliged by their office to pay a just tribute of fame to

* See his *Britannia*, under the article *Caledonia*.

† Tacit. *Annal.* lib. ii. cap. ult.

the benefactors of the public; even crowned heads and warlike Chieftains thought it no disparagement to their high rank to exercise their talents in the poetical-eulogiums so common in those times.

THE Princes of Scandinavia valued themselves much on their poetical genius. Four Norwegian monarchs, and a Danish King, distinguished themselves remarkably in that way. These were Harald Harfager, Olaus Trygvinus, Olaus the faint, Harald the imperious, and Ragnar Lodbrach *. The great men who held of those monarchs, emulated their masters in displaying the fire and vigour of their genius in a study so fashionable in those romantic ages.

THE Caledonian Princes of ancient times were animated by the same spirit. We know that James the First was an admirable poet for the age in which he lived. Some Galic rhimes composed by his cousin german, Alexander, the famous Earl of Mar, have been hitherto preserved. The Highland Chieftains contended frequently in alternate verse: nor have all those poetical dialogues perished. The apostle of the Pictish nation, and the old Scottish missionaries were remarkably fond of the muses, and frequently couched their sacred lessons in song.

THE public has lately received the works of Ossian, the son of Fingal. The impartial and men of taste have read them with admiration, and sensibly felt the

* Torfæus, in Orcad. præfat. ad Lect.

true language of natural and sublime genius. Those who affected to despise the compositions of ancient times have been confounded and mortified by the impartial voice of Europe in the praise of those poems. The candid part of the nation, though some of them perhaps were at first prejudiced against the genuineness of the work, have been agreeably surprized to find that their suspicions were absolutely groundless.

It has been a question with some whether Ossian was a Caledonian or Irish Bard. Asia and Europe, in a remote age, contended for the honour of having given birth to Homer. It is therefore no matter of wonder that North Britain and Ireland should emulously claim a particular right to the great poetical fun of their dark ages. They have formerly contended for much smaller prizes. The questions whether Sidulius, the poet, whether Cataldus, the bishop of Tarentum, whether St. Aidan, St. Finan, St. Adamnan, and many more wrongheaded monks, belonged more properly to the sacred island than to the wilds of Caledonia, have been agitated with all the keenness and zeal incident to national disputes of that kind.

THE editor of Ossian's works is very able to defend his own system. When objections worthy his notice are raised, he will certainly pay them all due regard. If he will sit down gravely to confute the groundless and ill connected objections which have been raised by some people in the cause of Ireland *, it is descend-

* See Mr. O Connor and Dr. Warner on this subject.

ing too far from that dignity of character which he has already acquired. For the poetical errors of his author, if he has committed any flagrant ones, the translator is no ways accountable. But if Ossian's compositions do honour to that dialect of the Celtic language, in which they have been wrote, to that Celtic nation which produced the Bard, and to human genius itself; the editor has an indisputable title to great praise, for bringing to light such a monument of the poetical merit of the ancient Bards.

AMONG the several arguments from which it may be concluded that the author of Fingal was a Caledonian, the language he uses is a decisive one. The genuine Irish poems which are to be found in books, and the little Irish songs which are brought into the Highlands by strolling harpers from Ireland, are in every other stanza unintelligible to a Highlander.—But the language of Ossian's compositions is easily understood by every one who has a competent knowledge of the Galic tongue.—If some few of the words are uncommon, or become obsolete, it is no more than what must have been naturally expected in a work so ancient. It is astonishing what a purity and simplicity of language prevails over all the works of this poetical hero, while the Galic compositions of the last century are dark, affected and confused*.

WHETHER Ossian flourished in the third, in the fourth, or in the fifth age, is a point difficult to

* See Lhoyd's Irish preface to his Irish Dictionary.

discuss. His poems are undoubtedly more ancient than any extant in the Celtic tongue, and the genius of the diction, of the arrangement and sentiment, gives a strong internal proof of their genuineness and high antiquity *.

BESIDE the Bards appointed by authority in Caledonia, the Princes, great Lords, and petty Chieftains, aspired much after the reputation arising from a poetical genius. It was impossible that all the numerous essays produced, could be destitute of merit. Every clime, however distant from the sun, is capable of producing men of true genius. The thick fogs of Bœotia, and the cold mountains of Thrace, have given birth to illustrious poets, while the scorching sands of Africa have remained languid and silent.

THERE is great reason to doubt the doctrine advanced by Martial, that there will be no want of poets equal to Maro, if there should be patrons as munificent as Mecænas: at the same time it is certain, that when the love of poetry in a nation confers upon those who have a genius that way, rewards of honour, profit, and reputation, their compositions will be numerous, and some of them worthy of public attention. The old Caledonians were as bountiful to their poets as their posterity the Irish were. Lands were appropriated to the eminent Bards, and became hereditary in their

* Dr. Blair's Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian.

family. Many districts in the Highlands still retain the name of the Bard's territory *.

ABOUT a century back one of the Highland Chieftains retained two principal Bards, each of whom had several disciples who were his inseparable attendants. The Chieftains of former times, if led by choice, or forced by necessity, to appear at court, or to join those of their own rank, on any public occasion, were attended by a numerous retinue of vassals, and by their most eminent poets and ablest musicians. Hence it was that in the spacious hall of an old Celtic King, a hundred Bards sometimes joined in concert. Keating informs us that there was no less than a thousand principal poets in Ireland during the reign of one monarch.

WE of modern times may perhaps condemn this strange taste of our barbarous ancestors. We may blame them for retaining and loading with wealth and honours such numerous bands of rhimers, a race of useless, insolent, and flattering men. A slur of this kind is unjustly thrown on our progenitors, till we remove a prevalent folly of the same kind from among ourselves. Our great men, to their honour be it said, give but little encouragement to poets, or that flattery which is natural to the muse. But our courts are full of worthless sycophants, the halls of

* The second title of the noble family of Athol is taken from lands appropriated to a Bard. *Tullybardin* is compounded of *Tulloch*, a hillock, and *bardin*, bards.

our Lords with pimps and parasites. Flattery feeds on the folly of the great without the merit of being cloathed in the strength of sentiment, or in the harmony of numbers.

BUT to return back to the regions of antiquity: the martial exploits of great men were sung by the Bards in epic poems, and transmitted from one generation to another. They exerted the whole force of their genius in perpetuating the memory of departed heroes, in exciting the nobles to walk in the same paths of activity and glory, and in rousing up their nation to support its dignity and to cultivate the generous and manly virtues. Praise throws around virtue attractive charms. Nothing tends more to raise sentiments of magnanimity in the heart than the nervous and glowing exhortation of the poet. It follows, therefore, that the Bard was the great and successful instructor of the barbarian, and had in some measure a right to be held sacred.

HISTORY informs us, that men of that character have done the most important services to states overpowered by a victorious enemy, or enslaved by tyrants. Tyrtæus, though a very despicable person in his appearance, saved Lacedæmon from utter ruin, and by the strength of his poetical abilities *; and Alcæus, by employing the same talent, rescued his country from the hands of cruel usurpers †.

* Justin. lib. iii, cap. 5.

† Horat. Carmin. lib. ii, od. 13.

WE are told by Quintilian *, that Alcæus was rewarded with a golden plectrum for his great services. Horace, for the same reason, assigns him a place of distinguished honour in the Elyfian fields: and to give us a just idea of this patriot poet's merit, he throws around him a numerous crowd of ghosts, attentively hearing those spirited war songs which contributed so much to expel the enemies of liberty out of Lesbos.

PLATO, who was a declared enemy to the order in general, gives the title of a most divine poet to Tyrtaeus, and pronounces him at the same time a wise and good man, because he had in a very excellent manner celebrated the praises of those who excelled in war †. There is something in the character of Tyrtaeus which seems to resemble that of a Celtic Bard. He was a poet and musician at once. The instruments on which he played were the harp and that kind of martial pipe which the Lacedemonians used instead of the trumpet of other nations.

THE chief Bards of North Britain, like those of other Celtic nations, followed their patrons into the field, and were frequently of signal service. It was their business and custom, upon the eve of a battle, to harangue the army in a war song composed in the field. This species of song was called *Brofhuha Cath*, that is to say, an *inspiration to war*. The poet addressed a part of this persuasive to every distinct tribe, shewing them the rewards of a glorious death, and remind-

* Institut. lib. x. cap. 1.

† De Repub. lib. 1.

ing them of the great actions performed by their ancestors. He began with a warm exhortation to the whole army, and ended with the same words. The exhortation turned principally on the love of fame, liberty, and their Prince. "The Germans, says Tacitus, have poems which are rehearsed in the field, and kindle the soul into a flame. The spirit with which these songs are sung predicts the fortune of the approaching fight; nor is their manner of singing on these occasions so much a concert of voices as of courage. In the composition they study a roughness of sound and a certain broken murmur. They lift their shields to their mouths that the voice, being rendered full and deep, may swell by repercussion *."

THE fate of battles depended not a little on the encomiums and invectives of the Bards. To be declared incapable of serving the sovereign in any military station is now deemed an indelible reproach. To incur the satire of the Bard, by a cowardly behaviour, was reckoned in former times the last degree of infamy and misfortune.

WE are told by a Norwegian historian †, that in time of sea engagements, if near the coast, the Scalds of Norway were sometimes landed in a secure and convenient place, and ordered to mark every event distinctly, so as to be afterwards able to relate them in verse. The same author informs us, that Olaus, the

* Tacit. de mor. Germ. cap. 3.

† Torfæus, in Hist. Rerum. Orcad. vid. præfat.

Saint, had in a day of action appointed strong guards for his three principal poets, after giving them instructions of the same kind.

WHEN a great and decisive battle was fought, the Bards were employed in doing honour to the memory of those gallant men who had sacrificed their lives in defence of their country, and in extolling the heroes who had survived the slaughter of the day *.

A JUDICIOUS Roman poet observes that many brave men who lived before Agamemnon were buried in oblivion, unlamented and unknown, because they had the misfortune of wanting a poet to celebrate their memory †. This observation is in some mea-

* In the year 1314, Edward the Second, of England, invaded Scotland at the head of a very great army, having, according to all human appearance, reason to expect an absolute conquest of that kingdom. Full of this imagination, he ordered the prior of Scarfborough, a celebrated Latin rhimer, according to the taste of those times, to follow his troops all the way to Bannockburn. He intended to employ this eminent poet in immortalizing his victory; but fortune declared for the enemy, and the prior was found among that immense number of prisoners which the Scots had made: the ransom demanded for his life was, a poem on the great subject he had before him. He gave a specimen of his skill, but it was invitâ Minervâ, though he succeeded wonderfully well in the judgment of times not remarkable for delicacy of taste. Another learned monk was appointed by the Scots to eternize their victory in verse; and though Apollo was as niggardly in his aid to him as he had been to the English Carmelite, we have reason to believe that his composition was much admired.

† Horat. Carmin. lib. 4. od. 9.

ture.

sure just. But it may be doubted whether heroism is more ancient than poetry, and whether any illustrious personage of the remotest ages of the world wanted his Bard. It is certain that the works of many eminent poets have perished altogether, and with them the renown and even the names of those mighty chiefs whom they endeavoured to eternize. At the same time it is evident, that of all the monuments which ambition is able to raise, or the gratitude of mankind willing to bestow, that reared by the muse of a genuine poet is the most expressive, the most durable, and consequently the most to be desired. The works of Phidias and Praxiteles, once thought everlasting, are now no more. The faintest traces of the magnificent Babylon cannot now be investigated. The famous Egyptian pyramids, though still extant, have not been able to preserve the name of the vain monarchs by whom they were constructed. But the structures which Homer has built, and the monuments which Virgil has raised to the memory of illustrious men, to Gallus, to Mæcenas, and Augustus, will perish only together with the world.

THOUGH the best of Roman poets had a contempt for Ennius, yet the elder Scipio, with all his learning and taste, had a greater respect for him than Augustus had for Virgil himself. The old Calabrian Bard was constantly near that *thunderbolt of war*, and we are told by Cicero, that a marble statue was erected for him in the burial place of the Scipios *. It therefore is no

* Oratio pro Archia Poeta.

matter of wonder that Celtic Kings and Celtic Lords should have patronized the poets of their own times ; a race of men whose compositions, however rough or unpolished, kindled the soul of the warrior to attempt great actions, and promised the hero a perpetuity of fame.

THE more ancient Bards were greatly superior to those of later ages, yet mere antiquity was not the real cause of that superiority. In times more remote, true merit was the Bard's only title to favour. In after days the office became hereditary, and an indefeasible right was the circumstance which rendered his person and character sacred. It was only after the feudal law took place, that the proper reward of genius and great actions became the birthright of unworthy persons.

No people, however barbarous, could have imagined that the lineal heir of an eminent poet should inherit the natural enthusiasm or acquired talents of his predecessor. But the general custom of entailing almost every office in certain families, and perhaps an extraordinary regard paid to the memory of some excellent poet, secured the possession of the grant of land to the posterity of those bards whose merit had acquired them that lucrative distinction from their superiors.

DISSERTATION XV.

Of the Western Islands of Scotland.—Accounts given of them by the Writers of Rome.—Of their ancient Names, Ebudes, Hebrides, and Inche Gaul. Subject to, and possessed very early by the Scots of Jar-ghaël.

THE disquisitions of antiquaries are incapable of those ornaments which, in the opinion of the world, constitute fine writing. To trace the origin of a nation through that darkness which involves the first ages of society, is a laborious task, and the reputation attending the success of a very inferior degree. The antiquary is no more than a kind of pioneer, who goes before, to clear the ground, for the construction of the beautiful fabric of the historian. In this dissertation I enter into the dissection of words, the investigation of etymons, and into an inquiry into the ancient state of islands now very unimportant in the British empire. Should this trivial subject discourage any reader, let him turn to another section.

THE geography, as well as internal history of the Northern Europe, was little known to the writers of Greece and Rome. The uncultivated and barbarous state of the Celtic nations discouraged travellers from going among them. The Romans met often, on their frontiers, hostile nations, to whose very name, as well as country, they were absolute strangers.—Involved in a cloud of barbarism at home, the inhabitants of the North were only seen when they carried war and desolation into the provinces of the empire ; and consequently the accounts given of them by the historians of Rome are vague and uncertain.

THIS ignorance of the true state of the Northern division of Europe afforded an ample field for fiction, and encouraged pretended travellers who had a talent for fable, to impose upon the world the most absurd tales, with regard to the situation, history and inhabitants of the barbarous regions beyond the pale of the Roman empire. Strabo complains frequently that Pythias the Massilian, and other travellers, could not be credited, in the account they gave of their voyages, which looked more like a poetical fiction, than a faithful narration of facts. Pythias, though a man in the most indigent circumstances, had the vanity to say, that he had travelled over all the Northern division of Europe, to the very extremities of the world : “ A story, not to be credited,” faith Strabo *, “ though Mercury himself had told it.” He pretended to have visited Britain in the course

* Lib. ii. p. 163.

of his peregrinations, and with great gravity gives a very circumstantial description of that island. He also says, that he made a voyage to Thule, the remotest island belonging to Britain, at the distance of six days sailing from it, in the skirts of the frozen ocean. He is candid enough to own that he was obliged to others for the history which he gives of that place; but he does not hesitate to affirm that he himself had seen it. It was a place, according to him, which was neither earth, sea nor air, but something like a *composition of all of them*, something resembling, to use his own expression, the *lungs of the sea*, something, in short, totally inaccessible to the human species. Such is the ridiculous account which the Massilian traveller gives of Thule, and from which the idle tales of succeeding authors concerning that island seem to have been taken.

SOLINUS describes Thule as an extensive tract of land, inhabited by a race of men, who, in the beginning of the vernal season, fed, like their cattle, upon grass or straw, lived upon milk in summer, and laid up the fruits of their trees in store for their winter provision*. But his authority will not be greatly respected by those who know what he has said of men and women, whose feet were contrived like those of horses, and whose ears were long enough to cover their whole bodies.

STRABO owns that those who had seen the British Ierna had nothing to say concerning Thule, though

* Solin. Polyhif. cap. 35.

they gave some account of other small islands on the coasts of the Northern Britain. We learn from Tacitus, that Domitian's fleet, after the reduction of the Orkney isles, descried Thule; a place which till then, faith he, lay concealed under snow and an everlasting winter*. The truth of this fact rests upon the veracity of the person from whom Tacitus received his information.

PTOLEMY is so particular in his account of Thule, as to inform us, that it lies in sixty-three degrees N. Lat. and that the longest day there consists of twenty-four hours†. There is no place near the British isles to which this, or any other description given of it, can agree better than to Shetland. But after all that has been said upon the subject, with a considerable expence of erudition, by Sir Robert Sibbald and others, there is reason to conclude, with Strabo, the most judicious of all ancient geographers, and one of the best historians and critics of remote times, that the history of Thule is *dark, dubious and unauthentic*‡, and that every thing told by Pythias concerning it is a fiction.

THE isles of North Britain have been divided by some ancient geographers into two classes, and by others into three. The first of these classes consists of the *Ebudes* and *Orcades*. The second comprehends the *Hemodes*, *OEmodes*, or *AEmodes*, together with the

* Dispecta est et Thule, quam hactenus nix et hyems abdebat. Vita Agric. c. 10. † Lib. viii. c. 2. ‡ Strabo, lib. iv. p. 308.

two just mentioned. An exact description of places then so little known, cannot be expected from these writers; but their voluntary errors admit of no excuse.

PLUTARCH relates, upon the authority of one *Demetrius*, who seems to have been employed by the Emperor Adrian to make geographical observations and discoveries, that some of the British isles were consecrated to Demi-gods:—That *Saturn*, bound with *chains of sleep*, is confined in one of them, under the custody of *Briareus*, and that several inferior divinities are his constant attendants.

SOLINUS writes with great gravity and seeming precision concerning the inhabitants of the Ebudes, their manner of living, and their form of government. “They know not,” says he*, “what corn
“is: they live on fish and milk only. The isles
“of the Hebudes are separated from one another by
“narrow sounds, and by reason of their contiguity
“are governed by one King. This Monarch has no
“property.—He is supported at the expence of the
“public.—He is bound by established laws to rule
“according to the principles of equity. Lest he
“should be tempted by avarice to commit any acts of
“oppression, poverty confines him within the rules
“of justice.—He has no personal interest to promote.
“—He has no wife, that can with any propriety be
“called his own: any woman for whom he conceives

* Solin. Polyhistor. cap. 35.

“ a passion must be at his service.—Hence it is, that he
 “ has neither hopes nor desires with regard to chil-
 “ dren, to whom he cannot claim a peculiar right.”

MANY ancient writers of history and geography have taken a boundless liberty of inventing marvellous stories, in their descriptions of the manners and customs of distant nations ; and Solinus seems, in his description of Thule and the other British isles, to have indulged his fancy in that respect with much freedom. Some eminent critics have observed, that this author copies, in a servile manner, after Pliny the elder ; but he has rejected his authority with regard to the number of the Ebudes and of the Orkney isles. According to Pliny *, the Orcades amount to forty, and the Hebrides to thirty ; but Solinus reduced the number of the Hebrides to five, and of the Orcades to three wretched isles, overgrown with rushes, or made up of horrible rocks or naked sands, and totally destitute of inhabitants.

IF Solinus flourished, as is commonly supposed, after Tacitus had published the life of Agricola, or the history of his own times, it is surprizing that he could have been a stranger to the works of that excellent writer, and totally unacquainted with the story of the voyage performed by Domitian's fleet round Britain, and the conquest made of the Orcades during that voyage. Solinus is one of those ancient geogra-

* Nat. Hist. lib. iv. cap. 16.

phers who divided the isles of North Britain into two classes only—the Hebudæ and the Orcades.—Ptolemy follows very nearly the same division. But Pomponius Mela, after informing us that there are thirty Orcades, placed at small distances from one another, observes that there are seven OEmodæ lying over against Germany *, which are probably the isles of Shetland.

SALMASIUS and other critics believe that the Ebudæ of Ptolemy and Solinus are the OEmodæ of Mela. The great similarity of the names, and the silence of the last of these writers with respect to the Ebudæ, and of the other two with regard to the OEmodæ, seem to justify this opinion. But Pliny's authority is against it. That author distinguishes the OEmodæ from the Hebudes, with the greatest clearness and precision †; and he could not have been misled by either of the other two geographers. He wrote before Ptolemy, and after Mela.

It is matter of some wonder that the ancient writers of geography, who flourished before the reign of Domitian, could have known more concerning the Orcades, than Solinus, who flourished after Tacitus wrote his history. Pomponius Mela was cotemporary either with Julius Cæsar, or rather with Claudius. This we have reason to conclude from a passage in that part of his work where he attempts to give an

* Mela de situ Orb. lib. iii. cap. 6.

† Nat. Hist. lib. iv. cap. 16.

account of Britain *. But supposing Mela to have been cotemporary with the last of these Emperors, rather than with the first, one will be still at a loss to find out how he could have learned that there were islands to the North of Britain, which were called Orcades, and which were separated from one another by narrow friths, and were thirty in number. We learn from Tacitus, that before Agricola's time it was a problematical question, whether Britain was an island or part of a Continent; and it is not probable that any foreign ships had sailed to the Northern extremity of it before the period he mentions. The Carthaginians are the only people who can be supposed to have made such a voyage; and it was not consistent with their maxims of policy and commerce to have made public their discoveries. It is plain, however, that Mela and Pliny had received distinct information concerning the name and number of these isles. These authors differ indeed as to the precise number of the Orcades: one of them makes them thirty, and the other forty. But this difference is not material, if we consider that there are no less than forty Orcades, including the *Holmes*, and not more than thirty, if we enumerate those only which are or may be conveniently inhabited.

BUCHANAN was totally at a loss with regard to the origin and meaning of the word Orcades. Camden

* Britannia qualis sit, qualesque progeneret mox certiora et magis explorata dicentur: quippe tam diu clausam aperit ecce principum maximus, &c. Mela de situ Orb. lib. iii. cap. 7.

attempted to explain it very ingeniously: he quotes an old manuscript, which was afterwards published by Father Innes, where it is derived from *Argat*; that is to say, according to the author of that little tract, above the Getes: but he rejects this etymon, with good reason, and conjectures that the name in question is derived from “*Arcat*, or above *Cath*, a country of Scotland, which, from a noted promontory there, is called *Cathness*.”

THE justness of this etymon is founded on a supposition that the modern *Caithness* was called *Cath*, before *Mela*’s time at least. But were that supposition well grounded, and were it certain that instead of *Carini* in Ptolemy, we should read *Catini*, which Camden supposes, in order to help out his conjecture, I am still apt to think that the Word *Orcades* should be derived from another source. The old Scottish bards call Orkney *Inche-Torc*, that is to say, the *Islands of whales*. One of two things must have been the foundation of the name: either whales of an enormous size were frequently seen around the Orkneys, which indeed is still the case; or those old Caledonians who saw these isles at a distance, compared them to these monstrous sea-animals. Agreeable to the last of these suppositions, the Highlanders of Scotland call the Orkneys *Arc-have*, that is to say, the *Swine* or *Whales* of the ocean*.

I SHALL

* In the Galic language *Orc*, *Arc*, and *Urc*, signify a Sow. *Torc* likewise signifies a Sow. The old Scots called the whale commonly *Muc-Mhara*, i. e. the sow of the ocean.

For

I SHALL now endeavour to throw some light on that part of the ancient history of Britain wherein the Hebrides are more particularly concerned ; a subject hitherto almost entirely neglected, though not absolutely unworthy the attention of the curious.

PTOLEMY and Solinus comprehend five isles under the general name of Ebudæ or Hebrides. They are enumerated by the former ; and the names he gives them are *Ricina*, *Maleos*, *Epidium*, the Western and the Eastern Ebudæ. In Camden's opinion *Ricina* is *Richrine*, an isle which lies much nearer the coast of Ireland than that of North Britain, and belongs to the county of Antrim. But as Richrine was too inconsiderable an isle to have deserved Ptolemy's particular notice, amidst such a vast number of other islands omitted by him, and as Camden's opinion is founded solely on a remote affinity of names, there is, I think, more reason to believe, that the *Ricina* of the Egyptian geographer, and the *Riduna* of Antonine's itinerary, is rather the *Arrin* of Scotland : so they who speak the Galic call an extensive island near the mouth of the Clyde, which is the property of the family of Hamilton.

CAMDEN thinks that the ancient *Epidium* is the same with Ila ; *Maleos*, Mull ; the *Western Ebuda*, Lewis ; and the *Eastern Ebuda*, Sky. But if *Ricina* is the same with

For a full and distinct account of the Orkney isles the reader may consult the works of Torfæus, a Norvegian historian, and of Mr. Wallace, a learned Minister of Kirkwall.

Arran, it is far from being improbable that *Epidium* is the island of *Bute*, which lies near it; *Ey Bhoid*, that is, the Isle of Bute, in the Galic language, being much more nearly related to *Epidium* in its sound than *Ila*. I have no objection to Camden's opinion with regard to *Maleos* and the larger *Ebudæ*.

PLINY is the oldest author who has made very particular mention of the *Ebudes*; and if we consider their number only, he speaks of them with much greater accuracy than any of the ancients. According to him, there are no less than thirty isles of that denomination. If all the islands in the Deucalionian ocean, and all the *holms* adjoining to them, should be comprehended under the general name of *Ebudæ*, there are certainly more than three hundred of that class: but a vast number of the *holms* are too inconsiderable to deserve a writer's notice; and sixty at least of the isles which are of some consequence, may be justly reckoned appendages to the principal ones.—We cannot therefore blame Pliny for want of exactness in that part of his British topography which relates to the *Ebudes*. Some writers of the middle ages, who had occasion to understand the subject perfectly, inform us, that these isles were thirty-two in number, and the old natives call them twenty-four to this day.

WE can hardly guess what commodities could have been exported from Ireland in an early period, excepting live-cattle, hides, and slaves. However, Tacitus
informs

informs us, that merchants frequently visited that island, which, for that reason, was better known to the Romans of his time than Britain. There must have been a considerable intercourse between the Irish and the inhabitants of the Ebudæ in those times. They were undoubtedly at that time the same nation, in point of language, manners and customs. Pliny learned from some merchant of his own country, very particularly, the length and breadth of Ireland. The same person, or any other employed in the trade to Ireland, might have had a pretty exact account of the Ebudæ from the Irish, or even some of the natives of those islands, as no doubt they ventured often to Ireland in their *Curachs*. Agricola had not displayed the Roman Eagles in the Northern division of Britain when Pliny lost his life; and we are told by himself, in the very chapter where he speaks of the Ebudes, that the arms of the empire had not penetrated further than the Caledonian forest. It may therefore be concluded, that he received the account he gives of these isles as I have above supposed.

It is difficult to investigate the meaning or etymon of the name Ebudes, as the present inhabitants have no such term of distinction in their language. Camden's supposition was, that it ought to be derived from the sterility of the soil, or the total want of corn in those islands; *Eb-eid*, in the old British language, signifying a place destitute of corn. To support this conjecture, he quotes Solinus, who informs us, in a passage already mentioned, that the inhabitants of the Ebudes knew not the use of corn.

THIS

THIS etymon, however plausible, is far from being satisfactory. The Caledonians of the third century were, according to Dion, absolute strangers to tillage, as much as the inhabitants of the Ebudes, cotemporary with Solinus, could have been. Even the inland Britons of the South knew not agriculture in Cæsar's time. It may be therefore asked, with great propriety, why the isles on the western coast of Caledonia, and no other part of Britain, should be characterized by a want that was common to Britain in general?

SOME of the Ebudes, it is true, are very barren; but many of the Western islands were formerly among the most fertile and plentiful tracts of land in North Britain. It would therefore be equally proper, with Camden's etymon, to call them *Ey-budh* in the British, or *Ey-bhiod* in the Galic, that is, the *Islands of corn*, or metaphorically the *Isles of food*. The truth is, neither Camden or I can give any satisfactory etymon of the *Ebudes*.

THE old appellation of *Ebudes* has, by writers of later ages, been changed into *Hebrides*; a name utterly unknown to the more ancient writers of monkish ages, as well as to the old Greeks and Romans. The following conjecture may account in some measure for this change*.

OF all St. Patric's disciples, excepting perhaps Columba, *Bridget* had the good fortune of acquiring

* The name of Hebrides may probably have originally proceeded from an error in some transcriber, who mistook the *u* in Hebudes for *ri*.

the highest reputation. Her miracles and peregrinations, her immaculate chastity, constant devotion, and high quality in point of birth, made her very famous in Britain and Ireland. The several divisions of Britain concurred very zealously with Ireland, the country that gave her birth, in treating her character with a most superstitious respect. Through a course of ages she was thought a person of too much influence in heaven, and consequently of too much importance upon earth, to be tamely relinquished to the inhabitants of Kildare, who piqued themselves upon the peculiar honor of having her body interred in their ground. The Irish of Ulster challenged that honor to themselves. But the people of Britain would never cede a property so invaluable: the Picts were positive that her remains lay buried at *Abernethy*, the capital of their dominions; which *Nectan* the Great, one of the most illustrious of their Kings, had consecrated and made over to her by a royal and irrevocable donation *.

THE Scots, after having annexed the Pictish territories to their own, paid a most extravagant homage to the relics of Bridget in *Abernethy* †. But the inhabitants of the Western isles exceeded all the admirers of this female saint, excepting perhaps the nuns of *Kildare*, in expressing their veneration for her. To Bridget the greatest number of their churches were dedicated: from Bridget they had oracular responses: by the divinity of Bridget they

* See Innes in his Crit. Essay, Append. Num. 11.

† Boeth. Scot. Hist. lib. 9, Lest. in Rege 47.

swore one of their most solemn oaths: to Bridget they devoted the first day of February; and in the evening of this festival, performed many strange ceremonies of a Druidical and most superstitious kind.

FROM these considerations we have reason to suspect, that the Western isles of Scotland were, in some one period or other during the reign of popery, put under the particular protection of St. Bridget, and perhaps in a great measure appropriated to her; as a very considerable part of England was to St. Cuthbert. The name of this virgin-saint is, in Galic, *Bride*; and *Hebrides*, or *Ey-brides*, is, literally translated, the Islands of Bridget.

THE reason why the Ebudes of ancient times were in latter ages called *Inchegaul*, is more obvious. We have had occasion to observe that the old Scots of Britain and Ireland gave the name of Gauls to all foreigners indiscriminately. They affixed to that name the same idea which *hostis* expressed in the language of the more ancient Romans. *Hostis* at first signified a *stranger*, afterwards an enemy, either public or private, and consequently a person to be detested and abhorred.

DERMIT, the provincial King of Leinster, betrayed Ireland, his native country, into the hands of the English; and therefore the old Irish, in order to brand his name with an everlasting mark of infamy, called him *Dermot na ngaul*, that is, *Dermot of the strangers*, or the friend of a foreign nation, and consequently his
country's

country's enemy. The ancient Scots of Britain used the word *Gaul* in the same acceptation, and their posterity continue it to this day.

THE English were not the only foreigners of whom the Irish and Scots of former times had reason to complain. The *Normans* and *Easterlings* often molested them: they came from a remote country in a hostile manner, and therefore had the opprobrious appellation of Gauls affixed to them. The wars of the Irish against the Scandinavians are, by an Hibernian historian, who wrote on that subject, called the wars of the Gadelians against the *Gauls* *.

THE Western isles of Scotland were long subject to the Norwegians. The Scots of the Continent, who had a mortal aversion to those foreign interlopers, gave the name of *Inche Gaul*, or the Islands of strangers, to the Ebudes.

WE have already examined Solinus's account of the Ebudes, and his romantic description of their inhabitants. All the other old geographers who have made particular mention of these isles, have said nothing concerning the inhabitants: nor am I able to recollect that any Greek or Roman historian, who has written concerning the affairs of Britain, hath touched that subject. What the Scottish historians have told us concerning the first colonies settled in these isles, concerning the country from which they

* Keat. Gen. Hist. Part II. pag. 50.

emigrated, the manners and customs of the inhabitants, and that state of anarchy in which they lived, till blessed with a monarch of the Milesian race; all this, I say, rests entirely on the veracity of Irish fennachies, or the ill-founded suppositions of historians.

WE have reason to believe that the Ebudes, as they were distant from one another, and separated by dangerous sounds, were for a long time possessed by different tribes, and governed by different chiefs. It does not appear from authentic history, that these chiefs depended on the Kings of Albany, whether Pictish or Scottish, if any such Kings existed, till after the Romans left this island.

BUT whether we date the origin of the Scottish monarchy from Bede's *Reuda*, or from *Fergus* the son of *Ferchard*, or from *Fergus* the son of *Eirc*, which is indeed the most probable hypothesis, it may very reasonably be presumed, that soon after the establishment of that monarchy, the Ebudes were annexed to the Continental territories of the Scots. A cluster of islands, thinly inhabited, destitute of strong-holds, altogether unprovided for defence, and incapable of assisting one another, must have fallen an easy prey to any powerful invader. The Ebudes, however inconsiderable they may be thought now-a-days, would be a very considerable addition to the petty monarchy of the Scots of Albany, and could not fail to be an object worthy their acquiring;

AT whatever period the isles may have been annexed to the Scottish kingdom, the inhabitants perhaps would be inclined to embrace a proper opportunity to shake off their yoke, and to disturb the government of their new Lords. The history of these islanders in later ages, and the vindictive spirit of every conquered people, render this opinion probable. But there cannot be any foundation for the circumstantial account which Boece and Buchanan have been pleased to give us of grand rebellions in the Ebudes, during the reigns of Caractacus, Corbredus, Ethodius, and other ideal Scottish Kings. It is certain, notwithstanding all the pains taken by Abercromby to prove the contrary, that *Caractacus* never reigned in North Britain, and that *Corbredus*, *Ethodius*, and other royal persons of the same imaginary-existence, have fought their battles against the chiefs of the Ebudes only in the fabulous annals of our historians. The accounts they give of a *Donald of the isles*, so old as the times of the Romans, bear about them the apparent mark of a modern invention.

DONALD was a name very common among the Islanders; and two of that name, who were both of the great family whose power was once more than equal to that of the King, over all the Ebudes, were extremely famous. These were, Donald Earl of Ross, who fought a battle, fatal to Scotland, against an army raised by Robert Duke of Albany, during the captivity of James the First in England; and *Donald Balach*, who obtained a signal victory over the Earls

of Mar and Caithness, wounded the first of these noblemen, killed the other, and made a great slaughter of the King's army under their command. The public calamities produced by these battles, and the devastations committed by the two Donalds, seem to have led our historians, who were very ill informed concerning the affairs of the Ebudes, into a notion that all the Lords of the Isles went, from the earliest ages, under the same detestable name.

WHEN the Kings of Scotland possessed no other territories than those upon the Western coast of Albany, we may take it for granted that they frequently visited their dominions in the Ebudes. Being involved in perpetual wars, either with the Britons, Saxons, or Picts, it was necessary for them to secure the leading men of the Isles to their interest. Without a supposition of this kind, it is difficult to comprehend how the Scots could have subdued the Picts, or defended themselves against the Saxons. When Aëdan, King of Scots, invaded Northumberland, at the head of a numerous and gallant army, he received no assistance from the Picts, and had no Irish auxiliaries to support him in that expedition. We must therefore conclude that the Islanders, among whom Adamnan informs us Aëdan had been inaugurated, made a considerable part of that numerous army which he led into England.

ALL the Scots historians affirm, that the Western Isles made a part of the Scottish dominions, from the
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earliest accounts of time; to the death of Malcolm Canemore in the year 1093. On the demise of that prince; say these historians, his brother *Donald Bane* formed a design of mounting the throne; and to support, by foreign aid, his title, which was far from being just, as the old law of *Tanistry* had been abolished, he implored for this purpose the assistance of *Magnus the Barefooted*, King of Norway, and obtained it, upon ceding all the Northern and Western Isles of Scotland to that Monarch. Magnus took immediate possession of those isles, and the successors of *Donald Bane* in the throne of Scotland did not for a long time recover them. Orkney and Shetland remained in the possession of the Norwegians to the year 1468, when James the Third of Scotland married the daughter of Christian the First of Denmark, and got possession of those islands, until the portion of the Queen should be paid. Even the Ebudes likewise were subject to the Norwegians, till Alexander the Third, King of Scotland, after having given a signal defeat to the Norwegian army at *Air*, in the year 1263, re-annexed them to his dominions.

In this manner, and in these different periods, if the unanimous consent of Scottish writers could be depended on, did the crown of Norway acquire and lose the Western isles. But the Norwegian historians give a very different account of the matter in almost every material circumstance. Shetland, Orkney, and the Hebrides, were, according to them, subdued by their nation in a more early period than that assigned; and

and the Scots owed the restitution of those islands more to the negotiations of a treaty, and a sum of money, than to the force of their arms.—A discussion of this point will naturally comprehend the history of that Norwegian dynasty which went under the name of the kingdom of Man; which I shall briefly give, in the succeeding dissertation.

DISSERTATION XVI.

The History of the Norwegian Principality of the Isles, commonly called the Kingdom of Man.

IN the close of the preceding dissertation, I promised to give a brief history of the Hebridian principality of the Norwegians, commonly known by the name of the kingdom of Man. In the account I am to give, I shall follow more the digressive manner of the antiquary, than the regular narration of the historian. If I shall be able to throw a new and stronger light upon the subject, I shall attain my purpose, and leave the palm of fine writing to men of greater abilities.

ABOUT the year 875, according to the annals of Norway, written by historians appointed by authority*, Harold *Härfäger*, or the *Fairhaired*, one of the greatest heroes of Scandinavia, obtained a decisive victory over many independent Princes who disputed his title to the throne; and was declared King of Norway. Some of these Princes, who had been despoiled

* Torfæus in *Orcadibus*, p. 10 & 11.

of their dominions, took refuge in the Scottish isles, and uniting their forces there, made several descents upon the dominions of Harfager. Harold, exasperated by these frequent incursions, resolved to carry his arms to the retreats of the invaders. His progress through the isles was irresistible; and while he pursued his enemies from place to place, he made a total conquest of Man, the Ebudes, Shetland and Orkney. From that time forward, all the Islands became subject to the crown of Norway, and continued so, with little interruption, for many ages. The writer from whom I have taken this account, informs us further, that Harold often invaded the Continent of Scotland, and fought several battles there with great success: and to corroborate the testimony of the old *Islandic* historian from whom he had this relation, he appeals to the rhymes of two ancient poets of Scandinavia, who celebrated that monarch's actions in Scotland in heroic songs.

It is certain that a powerful army of Scandinavian pirates infested the Eastern coast of Scotland about the time now assigned, and committed the most cruel devastations, under the conduct of two famous brothers, *Hinguar* and *Hubba*. Constantine the Second, King of Scots, marched against them in person, and twice gave them battle. In the first action he obtained the victory, but in the second he was defeated, taken prisoner, and beheaded. This event happened, according to the Scottish historians *, in the 879; and

* Fordun, Boece, and Buchan. in vita Constant. II.

as Harold Harfager reigned at that time, the authority of the bards, to whom Torfæus appeals, seems to deserve credit. It is true, the enemies by whom Constantine was killed are by our historians called Danes: but that is an objection of no force: the pirates who infested the different kingdoms of Europe in the ninth century are, by different writers, stiled Norwegians, Danes, Getes, Goths, Jutes, Dacians, Swedes, Vandals, Livonians, and Frieslanders; their armies being composed of all those nations. As the countries from which these inundations of plunderers came, lay either to the East or North of the European kingdoms which they infested and harassed, they went under the more general denominations of Easterlings, Ostmans, or Normans.

It appears evidently from the annals quoted by Sir James Ware*, that in the year 735, the Normans laid waste a great part of Ireland, and the island of *Richrine*, which is reckoned by some one of the Ebudes. Three years after this devastation they infested Ulster and the Hebrides; and it is not probable that Orkney, which lay in their way, could have resisted their fury. In the year 807, continues Ware, the Danes and Norwegians, landing in the province of Connaught, destroyed Roscommon with fire and sword. At the same time *Cellach*, abbot of I-collumcille, fled into Ireland for safety, after the enemy had murdered a considerable number of his

* Antiquit. of Ireland, pag. 57.

people. He did not return to Scotland for seven years: and from that circumstance we may take it for granted that these savages made themselves masters of *Iona*, at least, and probably of all the other Western isles.

ABOUT the year 818, *Turgesius*, by some called a Dane, and by others a Norwegian, invaded Ireland. This famous adventurer, after a long series of piratical descents and flying battles, usurped at last the sovereignty of the whole island, ruled the miserable inhabitants with a rod of iron, made dreadful massacres of all the ecclesiastics he could seize, and committed their books to the flames.

THE Irish were revenged of this cruel tyrant, but had not strength enough to shake off the yoke of slavery under which they groaned. New supplies of hostile troops came yearly from Scandinavia, which, with the adherents of *Turgesius*, maintained the war with success against the divided natives. About the year 850, they possessed themselves of Dublin, and the parts of Leinster adjacent to that capital *, from whence the Irish were never able to drive them.

THE greatest Monarch that ever held the scepter in Ireland, prevailed, in the year 1014, with the greatest part of the provincial Kings to join their forces to his own, and to attempt a total expulsion of the common enemy. *Sitricus*, who was at that time King

* Ware's Antiq. of Irel. p. 58.

of the Dublinian Easterlings and Normans, used every possible precaution to make head against this powerful confederacy. He entered into a league with the King of Leinster, procured a body of auxiliaries from him, and received a great accession of strength from the Danes of Man and Inchegaul. After vast preparations had been made on both sides, the contending nations met at last near Dublin, and fought the obstinate and bloody battle of *Cluain-tarf*. In that fatal conflict the Irish lost the illustrious *Brian Boré*, their sovereign, together with his son and grandson, besides some provincial Kings, a vast number of the nobility, and many thousands of the common people *.

SITRICUS retired, and maintained his post in Dublin, with the shattered remains of his army. The preparations made by that prince before the battle, and the supplies he received from Man and Inchegaul, afford a clear demonstration that the Scandinavians were possessed of these isles before the æra assigned by the Scottish historians; and the Irish annals, from which Ware has taken the account he gives us of these things, are more to be depended upon, with regard to the time at least in which the Ebudes became subject to the crown of Norway, than the accounts followed by Buchanan, Boece and Fordun.

WE know that the Normans made considerable acquisitions in France, and the Danes in England,

* Ware's Ant. &c. p. 63. Keating's Gen. Hist. of Irel. Part 2. page 64.

about the same time that Turgesius became so formidable in Ireland. We learn from Fordun, that the Danes infested the Eastern coast of Scotland before the end of the ninth century. It is not probable, therefore, that the Hebrides, which lay in their way, could have been entirely overlooked by these freebooters, in the course of their ravages. These isles, discontinuous, and thinly inhabited, incapable of assisting each other with powerful succours, and lying at a great distance from the seat of the Scottish kingdom, could make little resistance to a torrent which at that time carried almost all Europe before it. The Monarchs of Scotland could not have relieved their Hebridian subjects, nor repossess themselves of their conquered islands: they had sufficient employment elsewhere; the Eastern provinces of their kingdom must be defended from the frequent invasions of the same barbarous enemy, or from the insurrections of the lately conquered Picts.

THE most authentic history of the revolutions which happened in the Western isles, is contained in the *Chronicle of Man*, as far as it goes. This small piece has been preserved by Cambden, in his *Britannia*. It was written by the monks of Ruffin, an abbey in Man, and is probably older, by a whole century, than Fordun's *Scotichronicon*. Those who examine the transactions of those times with attention, will discover some chronological errors in the *Chronicle of Man*; but these errors are owing to the negligence of transcribers, as they are manifestly incon-

inconsistent with the truth of facts related, and with the æras assigned in other parts of the Chronicle.

THIS ancient record begins thus: "In the year 1065, died Edward, King of England, of blessed memory. He was succeeded in the throne by Harold, the son of Godwin; to whom Harold Harfager, King of Norway, gave battle at Stainford-bridge. The victory fell to the English, and the Norwegians fled. Among the fugitives was Godred, surnamed *Chrovan*, the son of Harold the Black from Iceland. This Godred coming to the court of Godred, the son of Syrric, who reigned in Man at that time, was entertained by him in an honourable way. The same year William the Bastard conquered England; and Godred, the son of Syrric, dying, was succeeded by his son Fingal."

THE King of England who died in the year with which the Chronicle begins, was *Edward the Confessor*, a prince highly extolled by monks, who derived extraordinary advantages from his pious liberality. It is well known that Edward assisted *Malcolm Canmore* in recovering the throne of his ancestors, which had been usurped by Macbeth, and that Malcolm, for years, carried on a war against the Norman conqueror and William Rufus, his immediate successor. Malcolm died in the year 1093, about thirty years before Godred, the son of Syrric, left the kingdom of the isles to his son Fingal, and consequently thirty years before Donald Bane made the pretended donation of
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the Ebudes to Magnus of Norway. This donation never existed; for it manifestly appears from the Chronicle of Man *, and other concurring records, that the Norwegians had occupied the Western isles long before Donald Bane mounted the throne of Scotland, and before *Godred Chrovan* took possession of the dynasty of the isles.

GODRED was a powerful prince. He subdued a great part of Leinster, annexed Dublin to his empire, and reduced the Scots, according to the Chronicle, to such a state of dependency, that he would not permit them to drive more than three nails into any boat or vessel they built. Ware quotes a letter of Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, wherein that prelate called Godred King of Ireland †. He died, after a reign of sixteen years, at *Me*, or *Ila*, and was succeeded by his son Lagman.

TORFÆUS, following the annalists of his country, labours hard to prove that *Magnus* the *Barefooted* de-throned *Godred*, bound his son Lagman with iron fetters, made an absolute conquest of the Western isles,

* The authors of this Chronicle, and after them other writers, were mistaken in calling the Norwegian King, slain in the battle of Stainford-bridge, Harold Harfager. We learn from Torfæus and others, that the true name of that prince was Harold the Imperious. Harfager lived in a much earlier period. The same Chronicle writers, or their copyist, must have committed a blunder likewise in making the year 1066 the year of Godred Chrovan's accession to the throne of Man.

† Antiq. of Irel. p. 65.

and

and bestowed them on his son, *Sigurd*, with the title of King *. But the Chronicle of Man places the expedition of Magnus into the Western parts of Scotland, and into England and Wales, in the year 1098, twenty years after the death of Godred, and eleven after the death of his son and successor, *Lagman*. *Simon Dunelmensis* agrees with the chronicle in the æra here assigned; and if any regard is to be paid to the Scottish historians, the acquisition made of the Western Isles by King Magnus, must have happened soon after the death of *Malcolm Canemore*.

TORFÆUS, after a long discussion of the chronological difficulties arising out of these contradictory accounts, rejects the authority of the chronicle, confutes Buchanan, finds fault with some of the writers of his own country, and prefers at last the testimony of Ordericus Vitalis to all others. But if we follow that author's system, the first expedition of Magnus into the Western seas of Britain took place in the fifth year of William Rufus, that is, in the year 1092. According to this calculation, the Norwegian monarch must have seized on the Ebudes before the death of *Malcolm Canemore*, and consequently *Donald Bane* could not have been guilty of the infamous cession which has hitherto done so much injury to his memory.

MAGNUS the Barefooted, might have sufficient provocation to invade the Ebudes in a hostile manner, though subject to the crown of Norway before his

* Orcades, p. 71, 72.

time. Many of the piratical Easterlings and Normans, who infested the British isles, after the time of Harold Harfager, were originally independent of the Norwegian crown, or rendered themselves so. Turgesius, and his successors in Ireland, were sovereign Princes. The Earls of Orkney, though much nearer the seat of that empire to which they were vassals, made reiterated attempts to shake off all marks of subjection: and that the Kings of Man endeavoured frequently to render themselves independent, will appear in the sequel.

WE learn from the chronicle *, that one *Ingemunde* was sent by Magnus to take possession of the Hebrides, in quality of King. But the chiefs of the isles, finding that this man abandoned himself wholly to the most scandalous excesses, to lust, avarice, and cruelty, conspired against him, and, without regarding either his personal dignity or the authority of his constituents, set fire to the house where he was lodged, and destroyed him, together with his whole retinue. It was probably with a design of revenging this insult, that Magnus undertook the expedition already related. But whatever may be in this conjecture, it is plain, from the commission with which *Ingemunde* was invested, that the Kings of Man had asserted their independence, or had refused to pay the ancient tribute.

AFTER the death of *Lagman*, the son of Godred, who had taken the cross and died in the holy land, *Mur-*

* Chronicon. Manniæ, ad an. 1097.

card O'Brien, King of Ireland, sent, at the desire of the nobility of Man, one of his friends who was a person of royal extraction, to act as Regent in that island, during the minority of Olave, the brother of their late sovereign*. Here we have another clear proof that the Princes and great men of the Western Isles had withdrawn their allegiance from their old masters, the Kings of Norway.

MAGNUS the Barefooted, only recovered the territories which one of his remote forefathers had acquired, and which one of his more immediate ancestors had lost. He subdued all the Scottish isles from Shetland to Man, and according to some historians, added the fruitful peninsula of Kintyre to these conquests: he carried his victorious arms into South Britain, and made himself master of Anglesey, in spite of the united efforts of the two brave Earls who led a numerous army against him. He was unquestionably one of the most powerful Princes of his time, and prescribed what laws he pleased to all those whose situation made them obnoxious to his intemperate rage, or to the lust of his boundless ambition. The Welsh felt the dreadful effects of his barbarous power, and therefore courted his friendship with a multitude of presents. He obliged the Scots of Galloway to furnish him with timber, at their own expence, for the use of his bulwarks. He sent his shoes to *Murcard*, King of Ireland, and commanded him in the most peremptory manner, under the pain of his displeasure, to

* Chron. of Man.

carry them on his shoulders, in the presence of his ambassadors, on the anniversary of Christ's nativity. The Irish nobility received this insolent message with becoming sentiments of disdain and indignation: but *Murcard* was too wise to provoke the resentment of a conqueror whose power was equal to his pride, and told his friends that he would eat the shoes of the Norwegian monarch, rather than see any one province in Ireland destroyed. Accordingly he paid homage in the dishonourable way prescribed by the haughty Magnus, entertained his ambassadors with a royal magnificence, and dismissed them with the highest expressions of respect for their master.

It does not appear from any authentic record, that Magnus came near the Eastern coast of Britain in either of its divisions. His troops could not therefore have been of great use to *Donald Bane*, had any one of his nephews disputed the crown of Scotland with him: and indeed it appears to me more probable that Donald, upon the demise of his brother, possessed himself of the throne by virtue of the old *Tanistry* right, or that, according to some English historians, he was elected king, than that he owed his crown to the aid of a foreign ally.

DONALD'S immediate predecessor in the throne, though a great Prince, had disoblged the nation by many unpopular actions. He had introduced the English language, drefs, manners, and religion, in a country at that time full of the most violent prejudices

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against

against every thing which came from a quarter so hostile. His obstinate attachment to the interest of his brother in law, Edgar Atheling, involved the nation in a series of wars more expensive and calamitous than profitable or glorious. The large estates which he had settled on some noble exiles who followed the fortune of that weak Prince, must have greatly exasperated the Scottish nobility, and alienated their affections from his family. He had been overmatched by the conqueror of England, and grossly insulted by his successor, William Rufus. His heir apparent, Prince Edward, had perished unfortunately with Malcolm at Alnwick. The rest of his children by Queen Margaret were under age, and that Princess, already worn out by the austerities of a superstitious life, overwhelmed with grief, survived her husband and son but a few days.

ALL these circumstances conspiring together must have made it easy for Donald Bane to possess himself of the throne vacant by the death of his brother, without purchasing the aid of a Scandinavian potentate, so much at the expence of his country and his own reputation. His pretensions to the crown were opposed only by a law neither ancient nor ever much regarded; and the distractions at court in consequence of so many unhappy events, afforded him the most favourable opportunity of asserting his claim. The conclusion I would draw from what has been said on this subject, appears to me to be perfectly just: that our historians were ill informed with regard to the

manner how, and the time when the Western Isles fell under the dominion of Norway.

AFTER Magnus the Barefooted had, through his temerity, lost his life in Ireland, Olave, the son of Godred, recovered his paternal dominions, and reigned over the isles forty years. Olave was a Prince of a peaceable disposition, distinguished greatly by the religious virtues of the times, and extremely liberal to ecclesiastics. He was educated in the court of Henry I. and was on good terms with the monarchs of England throughout his life. He lived in amity with Ireland; and it does not appear that those Kings of Scotland, who were his contemporaries, disputed his title either to Man or the Isles.

SELDEN complained that *Olaus* and *Aulave*, *Amlaff* and *Anlaphus*, are names which breed great confusion in the English history; but these names seemingly different appear to me to be the same. The sennachies of the isles call the Olave, of whom we are now speaking, *Aula* or *Ambla*, in Latin, *Amlavus*, *Anlaphus*, or *Olaus*; and they distinguish him from other Princes of the same name by the title of *Ambla Dearg mac Ri Lochlin*, that is to say, *Red Olave, the King of Lochlin's Son*. Godred, the father of Olave, was from Scandinavia, which is called *Lochlin* by the inhabitants of the Highlands and Isles.

It is the opinion of some that *Lochlin* and *Denmark* are words of the same import: but it appears to me rather

rather that *Lochlin* and *Scandinavia* are synonymous terms. *Harold Harfager*, and *Magnus*, the Barefooted, were Norwegian Princes, and the islanders give no other appellation to those great conquerors, nor to other *Normans*, who held their ancestors under subjection for many ages, than that of *Lochlinich*.

IN the Galic language, *Loch* signifies a great collection of water, whether salt or fresh, and *lan* full. *Lun* is the name of a certain bird remarkably voracious. The Baltic might have been very properly called *Lochlan*, if it neither ebbs nor flows; and many different countries, particularly Scotland and Ireland, experienced that from this sea swarmed an immense number of pirates, who by an easy and just metaphor might have been compared to birds of prey and of passage. But whatever the etymon of the word *Lochlin* may be, it is certain that all the adventurers who came from the Baltic, or from the Northern seas, and the countries bordering upon them, whether Norwegians, Swedes, Finlanders, Russians, Livonians, Poles, Pomeranians, Danes, Frieslanders, or Icelanders, were by the Irish and Hebridian Scots called *Lochlinich*.

It has been thought a matter of wonder that Scandinavia, so barren in every other respect, should have been so very fertile of men, as to pour forth whole inundations of rovers almost every year from the latter end of the seventh century, at least, till the thirteenth.

SOME ingenious writers have endeavoured to account for this extraordinary phenomenon by resolving it into the effects of polygamy. A plurality of women were, by the laws or customs of Scandinavia, confined to the bed of one man, if we believe these writers; and hence it was that the inhabitants multiplied almost beyond belief. A country in this situation, which did not abound with the necessaries of life, could not but send numerous colonies abroad in quest of either plunder or settlements: and such colonies, consisting of adventurers hardy, enterprising, lawless, poor, and determined to make their fortune or perish in the attempt, must have carried desolation far and wide.

BUT it is by no means certain that polygamy was established either by law or custom among the ancient Scandinavians. The *Germania Magna* of the old geographers comprehended at least the Southern coast of the Baltic, together with its isles. Mela and Tacitus seem to extend it much farther*; and Cluverius is positive that Norway, Sweden, and every region lying to the North of the Baltic, made a part of that immense tract of land. The *Suiones* of Tacitus are undoubtedly either the Norwegians or the Swedes, or perhaps both: and the *Æstii* of the same author are by Archbishop Usher†, and other eminent critics, called the progenitors of those pirates, afterwards stiled Easterlings and Ostmans.

* Mela, lib. iii. cap. 3. Tacit. de mor. Germ. cap. 45.

† See Ware's Antiquities of Ireland, chap. 24.

TACITUS, who seems to have made the manners and customs of the Germans his particular study, informs us, that every one of that nation, excepting only a small number of the chiefs or leading men, contented himself with one wife, and that of all the barbarians in the world, they were the strictest observers of the matrimonial laws †. We have therefore reason to believe, that the *Suiones*, *Æstii*, *Cimbri*, *Teutones*, and other nations, of whom the Normans and Easterlings of after-ages must have been descended, had not a plurality of wives in his time; and it does not appear from good authority that polygamy became fashionable among the posterity of these nations, in the period intervening between the time of Tacitus and the introduction of christianity.

BUT even allowing, without any necessity, that polygamy was common in Scandinavia, still it is doubtful, from the history of nations who give into that custom, whether a plurality of wives increase population or not. As the males of Scandinavia were always engaged in war at sea, there is indeed reason to believe that the accidents from enemies, and those arising from a rude navigation, carried off a greater proportion of them than of the males of any other nation; and therefore it may be supposed that a greater number of women fell to the survivors. But, when we consider that the women of the North always attended

† *Severa illic matrimonia, nec ullam morum partem magis laudaveris: nam prope soli barbarorum singulis uxoribus contenti sunt, exceptis admodum paucis. Tacit. de mor. Germ.*

their husbands and friends in their expeditions, we must allow that they were subject to the same accidents with the males. In this way therefore it is impossible to account how the Northern Europe could cover the Southern divisions of it with such deluges of barbarous adventurers.

THE old Norwegians and Swedes, before their conversion to Christianity, were addicted to piracy, and esteemed it a glorious occupation. The wild tribes who lived near the gulphs of Bothnia, Finland, and Livonia, followed the same practice. The maritime nations inhabiting the Southern coast of the Baltic were led by the example and success of those rovers to try their fortune in the more wealthy divisions of the South of Europe. If to these numerous nations of plunderers we add those of Denmark, Holstein, Saxony, and Friesland, all the way to the mouth of the Rhine, we do not make the country of those Northern rovers, who have done so much mischief in former ages, more extensive than history affirms. It is also extremely probable that those who dwelt in the more inland districts of the kingdoms of the North joined the freebooting inhabitants of the sea coasts in their expeditions. In a division of Europe so extensive, it could have been no difficult matter to muster up swarms of adventurers, some thirsting after glory, others rendered desperate by poverty, and all of them animated by the success of their neighbours or predecessors in emigrations of the same kind.

It may also be suspected that the piratical Easterlings and Normans, who committed such devastations in the lower Germany, France, Britain, Ireland, and other places, were not so very numerous as they have been represented. Instead of making war in a regular manner, they generally invaded one particular division of a country near the coast, in flying parties, gathered all the spoils they could carry away, and destroyed every thing else. They were composed of several bodies independent of one another, and no sooner was one band gone than another came. By this means the countries exposed to their ravages had scarce any respite from their incursions: this circumstance must have greatly swelled the idea of their numbers in the minds of those who were so cruelly harassed by them; and as they made a conquest of some countries, the writers in the interest of the old natives, to save their credit in some measure, would perhaps have ascribed those conquests to the numbers of the enemy, rather than to their superior bravery.

To leave this digression, for the history of the dynasty of Man. *Olave*, King of the isles, after a long and peaceable reign, was treacherously slain by his own nephews: he was succeeded by his son, *Godred*, whom he had by the daughter of *Fergus*, Earl of Galloway, the most powerful subject in Scotland at that time.

Godred had sailed to Norway before his father's death, and did homage to King *Hinge*. In his absence the three sons of his uncle *Harold* seized on his dominions and divided them among themselves. But the usurp-

ing assassins soon met with the fate their crimes deserved. *Godred* returning from Norway, asserted his title to the kingdom of Man, caused one of the sons of Harold to be executed, and agreeably to the inhuman custom of those barbarous times, put out the eyes of the other two *.

Soon after *Godred* had recovered the inheritance of his ancestors, the Easterlings of Dublin invited him over into Ireland, and made him their King. Elated beyond measure by this great accession of power, he began to rule tyrannically in his own dominions, and regardless of justice and the laws, deprived the nobles of their estates. The most powerful among them, *Thorfin*, the son of *Oler*, to gratify his revenge, entered into a league with *Somerled*, the famous thane of Argyle, and after wresting many of the isles out of *Godred's* hands, by the assistance of that powerful chief, erected them into a separate kingdom for *Dugal*, the son of his new patron.

THE Chronicle of Man calls *Somerled* Prince of *Heregaidel*, and informs us further, that he had married a natural daughter of King *Olave*, and consequently *Godred's* sister. By that lady he had four sons: *Dugal*, of whom came the *MacDougals* of Lorn; *Reginald*, the progenitor of all the *MacDonalds* of Scotland and Ireland; *Angus*, an ambitious lord, whose great power and numerous offspring became extinct in a short time; and *Olave*, of whose actions or issue neither history nor tradition have recorded any thing memorable.

* Chron. Man. ad ann. 1143.

THE King of Man, upon receiving intelligence that Thorfin and Somerled had seized on a part of his dominions, equipped a considerable fleet, and putting to sea went in quest of his enemies*. Somerled met him with a fleet consisting of eighty sail: after an obstinate fight, attended with great slaughter on both sides, they patched up a peace, having agreed to divide the kingdom of the isles among them. From that day, saith the chronicle, may be dated the downfall and ruin of the kingdom of Man.

EITHER Somerled's ambition was very high, or Godred's perfidy provoked him soon to recommence hostilities; for he invaded Man with a new fleet about two years after the partition treaty had been concluded. Godred, unable to maintain his ground, abandoned the island, fled to Norway, and laid his grievances before the sovereign of whom he held his dominions by a feudal right. He remained in Norway for six years before his representations had any effect. At length he obtained a considerable supply of forces, and returning to Man, defeated his brother Reginald, who had taken possession of the island in his absence, and re-established himself in his kingdom†.

SOMERLED was killed before this revolution happened. Intoxicated by repeated victories, and his vast acquisitions, he had formed a design, if we believe the Chronicle of Man, to conquer all Scotland. Having,

* Ad ann. 1156.

† Chron. Man. ad ann. 1164.

in consequence of that extravagant project, equipped a fleet of one hundred and sixty sail, he landed a numerous army near Renfrew in Clydesdale. Here, saith the chronicle, he was, through the just vengeance of God, vanquished by a small number, and he himself, together with his son and a vast multitude of his people, slain*.

THE Highland sennachies give a very different account of Somerled's death and character. According to them, this powerful thane had received many insufferable provocations from the ministers of King *Malcolm IV.* a Prince weak, unexperienced, and entirely under the direction of his servants. The vast extent of Somerled's estate on the continent, to say nothing of the acquisition he had made in the isles, filled these ministers with a political jealousy, and tempted their avarice at the same time. Resolved to humble so formidable a subject, and to divide his lands among themselves, they compelled him, by a long series of atrocious injuries, to take arms in his own defence. The King's counsellors attainted him, and *Gilchrist*, Earl of Angus, the ablest general of that age in Scotland, was sent with a great military force to render that unjust sentence effectual; but Somerled fought the Earl, though with an inferior army, and the victory remained dubious. This happened during the minority of *Malcolm*.

AFTER that Prince had taken the reins of government into his own hands, his ministers, enraged by

* Chron. Man. ubi sup.

a disappointed ambition, made it their chief business to convince him that it was necessary to annihilate the overgrown power of Somerled, or at least to reduce him to a state of mediocrity. The force of an argument so specious, concurring with the facility of his own temper, prevailed easily with the King to favour their design. But to have something of a plausible pretence for commencing hostilities, it was agreed in council, that a person invested with a public character should be sent immediately to propose to the Thane, that in order to procure a remission of his crimes from the King, he should renounce his right to the lands held of him on the continent, and satisfy himself with his possessions in the isles.

SOMERLED was too conscious of his own strength, and too tender of his undoubted right, to acquiesce in a proposal no less injurious to his character than prejudicial to his interest. Incapable of disguising his sentiments, and fired with a just indignation, he drew his sword, and told the messenger that "He would sooner terminate the dispute with that weapon, than tamely surrender any part of his property." After returning such an answer to a message sent by his sovereign, he had reason to believe that a violent storm would immediately gather, and burst upon him: he therefore armed his numerous vassals in Argyleshire and the isles, procured a considerable body of auxiliaries from Ireland, and determined to carry the war into the country of his unprovoked enemies. He landed with an army of fifteen thousand men in the

Bay of St. Laurence, now Greenock, and marched directly to Paisley, where the King's troops were encamped. But before he could bring them to an action, he was most basely assassinated by *Maurice MacNiel*, one of his nephews, whom the King's generals found means to bribe. This is in substance the account given by the Highland sennachies of Somerled's dispute with his sovereign, and of the unhappy end of his life, which was the consequence of it. His followers, say the sennachies, betook themselves to their galleys, upon receiving the news of their leader's fate, and returned home without suffering any considerable loss.

THE account given by the Scottish historians of this matter, agrees neither with the Chronicle of Man, nor with the relation now given. According to them, Somerled's ambition knew no bounds, and his lust of power was insatiable. Led by the dictates of those passions, he formed an audacious design of extending the limits of the principality he had by very indifferent means acquired, at the expence of his sovereign. Malcolm IV. a minor, had mounted the throne of Scotland upon the death of his grandfather, David the Saint; and Somerled taking advantage of the minority, rebelled in the very beginning of this reign. He put himself at the head of a numerous army, consisting partly of his own vassals, and partly of lawless persons, whom the love of plunder or a consciousness of guilt had driven from all quarters to his standard, and laid waste those divisions of the kingdom which

lay next his own principalities. But the celebrated *Gilchrist**, Earl of Angus, being sent with an army to oppose him, gave him a total defeat, and obliged him to fly for refuge into Ireland.

MALCOLM'S reign was full of troubles. Henry II. of England, taking advantage of his pacific disposition and mean genius, forced him to surrender the towns and countries which his ancestors had possessed in South Britain. A cession so inglorious provoked the resentment of the Scottish nation, and became the foundation of a dangerous insurrection. To pacify the malecontents, Malcolm was under the disagreeable necessity of declaring war against England. But he carried on and concluded that war in a way which gave little satisfaction to his people. The alienation he made of Northumberland, and a scandalous pusillanimity which appeared in every part of his conduct, rendered his person and authority contemptible.

THE inhabitants of Galloway, despising this feeble administration, revolted openly, and those of Murray followed their example. In the midst of so many commotions and civil wars, which had destroyed the bravest soldiers in the nation, Somerled's genius was too enterprising to remain unactive. He had returned from Ireland, whither the unsuccessful battle already mentioned had driven him, and harassed for some time the coasts of Scotland with piratical depredations.

* There was no Earl of Angus called Gilchrist in that age. See Dalrymple's Collect. p. 392.

In a conjuncture so full of tumult and public confusion, he soon collected a large body of men, with whom he made a descent upon the left side of the river Clyde, and penetrated as far as Renfrew: but being too intent upon plunder, and too little solicitous about his own safety, he was surprized and his followers cut to pieces. Some writers relate that he himself was taken prisoner, brought before the King, and executed like a common malefactor; others will have it that he and his son fell in battle. Buchanan places these events about the year 1163.

I THINK there is reason to believe that both the Scottish historians and Highland sennachies have committed a number of errors in their contradictory account of this powerful chief. Had his birth been obscure, and his original fortune low, as these historians pretend, it is difficult to comprehend how he could have raised himself to the thanedom of Argyle, or why the public should have recognised his title. The Chronicle of Man calls him *Prince of Heregaidhel**, at the time of his marriage with the daughter of King Olave. It does not appear that this marriage gave him a right to any part of the isles, though Abercromby † concurs with the Highland genealogists in an opinion of this kind. Olave was succeeded by his son Godred, and the posterity of Godred inherited the greatest part of Olave's dominions, for a whole century after Somerled had been killed near Renfrew.

* A corruption of Jar-ghaël, that is to say, the country of the Western Caledonians.

† Mart. Atch. of the Scots nation, vol. ii. p. 440.

It is hard to determine whether Somerled gave the first provocation to his sovereign, or received it from the ministers of that prince. It is not improbable, that after he had acquired so vast an addition of power in the isles, he aspired to be independent towards the latter part of his life. If his whole army, as is alledged, a very small number excepted, was cut off near the river Clyde by an inconsiderable body of royalists, it is surprizing that his family should have subsisted, after his death, without any diminution of its vast power. No advantage appears to have been obtained by a battle so decisive. The estates of the rebel were neither annexed to the demesnes of the crown, nor parcelled out among court favourites. His son *Dugal* was left in the undisturbed possession of Argyle and Lorn: *Reginald*, another of his sons, was Lord of the Isles and Kintyre: *Angus*, their brother, was powerful enough to fight battles by sea and land against Reginald: and *Somerled* the Second, the fourth son of Somerled the First, and an hereditary traitor, say our Scottish historians, was able to raise a new rebellion in the reign of Alexander the Second.

I SUSPECT indeed that this Somerled the Second never existed, notwithstanding what hath been said about him by sennachies and historians. The Chronicle of Man makes no mention of him; and the time at which we are told he revolted, looks like a demonstration that the whole story is a mere fiction. Somerled the First was killed in the year 1164. The

younger Somerled rebelled against Alexander the Second in the year 1248 *. He must of course have been eighty-four years of age, when he engaged in a war against his sovereign, supposing he had been born on the very day in which his father was slain.

ANOTHER argument from which it may be concluded, with great probability, that the real Somerled's party sustained no considerable loss at Renfrew, is, that the division of the isles which had fallen to the share of that mighty Thane, after his first sea-fight with the King of Man, remained after his death in the possession of his son Reginald, and of his posterity for three centuries. If Somerled's army had been totally destroyed at Renfrew, it may be very reasonably presumed that *Godred*, King of Man, who had been violently dispossessed of these isles about eight years before that event, would have laid hold of so favourable an opportunity to re-annex them to his dominions, before the sons of Somerled could have recovered themselves from the loss they sustained in the battle which was fatal to their father.

It is true indeed the Chronicle of Melroß, another old historical register, agrees exactly with the account which we have in the Chronicle of Man, of the total overthrow given to Somerled's army. From it we learn, that "Sumerled, the petty King of *Eragaitbel*, had carried on an impious rebellion against his natural lord, Malcolm King of Scot-

* See Buchan. & Abercrom in Alexander II.

land, during the space of twelve years: that this rebel, after having collected a numerous army in Ireland and other places, was, through the vengeance of God, killed at *Renfrew*, together with his son, and a multitude of his vassals: and that a handful of men belonging to the same province, the inhabitants of Clydesdale probably, had the sole merit of delivering the nation from this rebel *."

SIR James Dalrymple quotes a charter belonging to the family of Innes, from which it appears that Malcolm and Somerled once concluded a peace, and of course that Somerled's rebellion could not have been of such a long duration as the Chronicle pretends. King Malcolm reigned twelve years only, and the Thane of Argyle died before him †.

It is more than probable that the true history of Somerled's birth and character—of his disputes with the Kings of Scotland and Man—of his last great armament and death, was this:—His ancestors were persons of considerable influence, though greatly inferior to him. He soon began to extend his power

* Sumerledus, Regulus Eregeithel, jam per annos duodecim contra Regem Scotiæ Malcolmum, dominum suum naturalem, impie rebellans, tam copiosum de Hibernia et diversis locis exercitum contrahens apud Renfrim applicuisset, tandem ultione divina cum filio & innumerabili populo, a paucis cumprovincialibus ibidem occisus est. Chron. Melros. ad ann. 1164.

† The charter was dated, *apud Pert. natali domini proximo post concordiam Regis & Sumerled*. Dalrymple's Collections, p. 425.

—he wrested half of the isles out of the hands of Godred, King of Man—he made war on Malcolm, King of Scotland—a battle was fought, but the controversy was not decided.—Malcolm, directed by his natural clemency, or more probably by reasons of state, adjusted all his differences with Somerled in an amicable way. After this agreement, the ambitious Thane taking advantage of his brother-in-law's unpopular administration, and the intestine commotions consequent upon it, seized on many of those isles which made a part of the Norwegian dynasty of the isles. Two successful sea-fights established the right which the strength of his arms and political intrigues had given him to that acquisition. An increase of power so great must have made him the object of public jealousy more than ever. A wise ministry saw the necessity of humbling a person already too powerful to be a good subject; and no doubt some of the nobles of Scotland were willing to sacrifice him to their avarice. Somerled saw the danger with which he was threatened, and took every precaution to defeat the machinations of his enemies. He formed the bold design of rendering himself totally independent of the crown. He had no reason to dread much from the magnanimity or address of Malcolm; and accordingly having collected a great body of men, not only in Argyle and the Isles, but likewise in Ireland, where he had connections, he made a descent on Clydesdale. The King's generals took the shortest and most effectual, though an ignominious way of ending the dispute. They bribed a person from
whom

whom Somerled could have no fears, and by his means got him assassinated. The rebels dispersed immediately; but the loyalists were too weak to pursue their success. They permitted the Highlanders to retire unmolested, and the sons of Somerled to divide his overgrown estate among themselves.

GODRED, King of the isles, was obliged to yield a considerable division of his hereditary territories, as related above, and was likewise stripped in a short time of the dominions he had acquired in Ireland. We learn from the annals of that kingdom, that *Dermot nan gaul* and his son-in-law, the famous Earl of *Pembroke*, took Dublin, the capital of the dominions of the Easterlings, in the year 1170*, and that the troops sent from Man to recover it, next year, were totally defeated, and their leaders slain.

GODRED died in the year 1187, during the winter season, and his body was in the following summer conveyed to *Icolm-cille* †. It has been observed already, that this King must very probably be one of those Norwegian Kings, who, according to the Scottish historians, lie buried in Iona.

OLAVE, surnamed the Black, the only legitimate son left by Godred, had been declared heir by his father, and by the pope's legate: but as he was too young to assume the reins of government, the people

* Ware's Ant. of Irel. chap. 24.

† Chron. Man. ad ann. 1187.

of Man made his natural brother *Reginald* King in his stead. We are told by the historians of Norway, that *Reginald* was the most famous warrior in the Western parts of Europe, during his time †. It had been the practice of some famous pirates among the old Normans to live for three years without entering under the roof of a house which emitted *any smoke*. *Reginald* had conformed himself to that custom, and became of course capable of sustaining hardships of every kind. He prudently lived upon good terms with the Kings of England, and studied to oblige those of Scotland. At the request of *William the Lion* he undertook to recover Caithness out of the hands of Harold, Earl of Orkney, and effected it §. After apprehending his brother *Olave*, and committing him to prison, for presuming to ask a more comfortable maintenance than the mountainous and sterile island of Lewis could afford him, he delivered him into the hands of *William*, to prevent a civil war; and the innocent prince was kept in prison during the life of that Monarch *.

REGINALD saw very good reasons for courting the honour of being a vassal to the see of Rome. The Popes of the twelfth and thirteenth ages prescribed laws to some of the greatest sovereigns of Europe, and secured the interest of those who committed their persons and estates to their protection. *Reginald* thought the tribute payable by his kingdom to the

† Torfæi Orcades, p. 146.

§ Ibid. p. 164.

* Chron. Manniæ.

crown of Norway too high, and the Lord of his allegiance was at too great a distance to defend him, if oppressed by one of his more powerful neighbours. He therefore, like two English Monarchs, his contemporaries, subjected his kingdom to the Pope, who demanded only an annual tribute of twelve merks †.

REGINALD, though illegitimate, stiled himself King of Man, *by hereditary succession*. In those days illegitimacy did not incapacitate any person in the Northern parts of Europe from succeeding his father in the possession of an estate or kingdom; and the case was much the same towards the South.

AFTER *Reginald* had reigned near thirty years, his brother Olave found means to re-establish his own authority in the Northern Ebudes; and having equipped a considerable fleet there by the assistance of his friends, invaded Man, and surprized Reginald: but he entered into a treaty with him, and left him in possession of Man, with the regal title.

IN a little time after the conclusion of this treaty, Reginald entered into a confederacy with Allan, Earl of Galloway, the most powerful subject of Scotland; and accompanied by that Lord, made an expedition into the Northern Ebudes, with a design of re-taking those territories which he had resigned to Olave by treaty. But the confederates found themselves under the necessity of returning home without effecting any

† *Fœdera Angliæ*, tom. 1. p. 234.

thing; the people of Man having too great a partiality for Olave, and too much regard for the Islanders in his interest, to fight them †. Soon after this unsuccessful expedition, *Reginald* pretended a journey to the court of England; and to defray the expence of it, obtained from the people of Man a pecuniary aid, which was thought very considerable at that time; but he went only to Galloway, in order to facilitate the execution of his former design, and to marry his daughter to the son of his ally. His subjects, disobliged by this gross misapplication of the aid they had granted, sent for Olave, and made him King §. *Reginald* made two unsuccessful attempts to dispossess his brother, and lost his life in the last of them.

THE competition being ended by the death of *Reginald*, and a perfect tranquillity ensuing, *Olave* went to Norway, with a design of paying homage to his sovereign, and getting his right confirmed; but before his arrival, *Haco*, the Norwegian Monarch, had made a certain nobleman called *Husbec* King of the *Sodorian* isles*. This nobleman, who, according
to

† Chron. Man. ad ann. 1225.

§ Ibid. ad ann. 1226.

* The meaning of the word *Sodor*, which has been very much misunderstood by many learned men, may contribute to throw light on some parts of the *Hebridian history*, hitherto involved in darkness, and apparent contradictions.—We are told by Buchanan, lib. 1. cap. 34. that the age before that in which he lived, gave the name of *Sodor* to a town in the Isle of Man. Bishop Brown, the author of a new description of that island, which Dr. Gibson has
annexed

to the Chronicle of Man, was the son of *Owmund*, but according to Torfæus, the son of *Dugal*, and grand-

annexed to the old one given by Cambden in his *Britannia*, supposes that the *Insulæ Sodorenſes*, thirty-two in number, were ſo called from the biſhopric of *Sodor*, erected in the iſle of Iona, which was one of them. Theſe *Insulæ Sodorenſes* were united to *Man*, if we believe him, about the beginning of the eleventh century, and the biſhops of theſe united ſees were ſtiled biſhops of *Sodor and Man*. But after the Iſle of Man, continues Dr. Brown, had been annexed to the crown of England, the two ſees were diſjoined, and Man had biſhops of its own, who ſtiled themſelves variously, ſometimes biſhops of *Man* only, ſometimes *Sodor et Man*, and ſometimes *Sodor de Man*; giving the name of *Sodor* to a little iſland, called by the Norwegians *Holm*, and by the natives *Peel*, in which the cathedral ſtood.—(See Cambd. Brit. Gibſon's edit. page 1449.) To juſtify this explication of the word, Dr. Brown appeals to a charter granted by Thomas, Earl of Derby, to one of the biſhops of Man, in the year 1505.

I ſhall not inſiſt on the difficulty of proving that a biſhopric was erected in the Weſtern iſles of Scotland before the twelfth century, or perhaps before the thirteenth, nor on ſome other remarks which might be made on the hiſtorical relation now given; but it is certain, that after Man had fallen into the hands of the Engliſh, the biſhopric of the Iſles was tranſlated by the Scots into Iona, and that the biſhops who filled that ſee from that period, till the final abolition of epiſcopacy after the revolution, went under the title of *Epifcopi Sodorenſes*: whether they or thoſe of Man had the beſt right to it we ſhall not now inquire.

If *Sodor* was a town in *Man*, in the beginning of the ſixteenth century, or in the fifteenth, which was Buchanan's opinion; or if, from that town or *Holm*, the biſhops of Man and the Iſles derived their reſpective titles, agreeably to Dr. Brown's opinion; it is difficult to

grandson of Somerled, was killed, in the first year of his reign, at the siege of a castle in Bute, and his body

comprehend, why, in charters, registers, histories, and common conversation, *Sodor* should be preferred to *Man*, of which it was no more than a small part. When we take the word *Sodor* in so confined a signification, there seems to be the same impropriety in styling a person *Bishop of Sodor and Man*, as in styling another of the same order Bishop of *Derry and Ireland*, Bishop of *Bangor and Wales*, or Bishop of *Dumblain and Scotland*.

The passage quoted from the Earl of Derby's grant seems to me to be misrepresented, and by no means to imply that *Pele*, *Holm*, or that small island to the West of *Man*, was the true *Sodor* of ancient times.

When the Norwegians conquered the Western isles, they sometimes changed the old Galic names of places, and gave them new ones, abundantly descriptive. Thus to the Eastern *Æbudæ* of the ancients they gave the name of *Ealand Skianach*, or the Cloudy Island; *Sky* in the Norse language signifying a Cloud; and to the Western *Æbuda*, that of *Logus*, or *Lodbus*, i. e. a Marshy Country, more fit for pasturage than tillage; and when they divided these isles into two parts, agreeably to their situation, and appointed a distinct governor to each, they gave the name of *Sudereys* to that division of the isles which lay to the South, and of *Nordureys* to that in the opposite quarter; *Ey* or *Ay*, in the Norwegian language, signifying an Island, and *Suder* and *Nerder* signifying Southern and Northern, when they possessed the ancient *Cathanesia*, they gave the new name of *Suderland* to a county in the Northern division of Scotland, now well known by the same appellation.

It appears from the history of the Orkneys, compiled by an old Islandic writer, and translated, with large additions, by Torfæus, that the explication now given of the two vocables *Nordureys* and *Sudereys*, is perfectly just.

body translated into Iona. Immediately after his death, *Olave* reassumed the government of his paternal

The promontory in Argyleshire, which is called the *Point of Ardnamurchan*, was the boundary which separated the *Sudereys* and *Nordureys* of former times from each other. To the South of that promontory lies Man, Arran, Bute, Cumra, Avon, Gid, Ila, Colensa, Jura, Scarba, Mull, Iona, Tiree, Coll, Ulva, and many other isles of inferior note. To the North of Ardnamurchan are Muck, Egg, Rum, Cannz, Sky, Rasay, Barra, South Uist, Benbicula, North Uist, and the Lewis, including Harris, together with a vast number of small isles. All these when joined together, and subject to the same Prince, made up the whole kingdom of Man and the Isles.

The Southern division of the Ebudes was reckoned more considerable than the Northern. The seat of empire was fixed in the former: the Kings kept their courts in the Isle of Man, and sent deputies into the *Nordureys*, who resided either in Sky or in the Lewis. When the kingdom of Man and the Isles was divided between Godred, the son of Olave, and Somerled, Thane of Argyle, Ila, one of the best isles in the Southern division of the Ebudes, fell to the share of Somerled, and became in some measure the capital of a second Hebridian kingdom: for these reasons the *Insulæ Sodorenses*, or Southern Isles, became much more famous than the *Nordureys*, and are therefore more frequently mentioned in history. When the Norwegian writers make no distinction between the *Sudereys* and *Nordureys*, the latter are always comprehended under the name of the former; and hence it was that the bishops of the isles were stiled bishops of *Sodor*, though their diocese included all the isles to the North of Ardnamurchan, as well as those to the South. But when the *Nordureys* are particularly mentioned by these writers, the Southern Ebudes are totally excluded: thus we are told by Torfæus, that *Magnus, the Barefooted*, some time

paternal dominions, and his title to the kingdom was in a little time recognized by *Haco*. He died in the Isle of Man, after a reign of eleven years, and was buried at *Ruffin*; the monks of that abby having found means to recommend themselves to his favour more powerfully than those of Iona.

OLAVE *the Black*, was succeeded by his son *Harold*: this young Prince confiding in the alliance he had contracted with the King of England, refused to pay homage to *Haco*, King of Norway. But that monarch, to punish the disloyalty of his vassal, sent *Gospatric*, one of his favourites, in quality of viceroy, into the isles, at the head of a great fleet. *Gospatric* drove *Harold* out of all his dominions; but dying soon thereafter, *Haco* was reconciled to *Harold*, and restored him to his paternal dominions, confirming to him and his heirs, under the royal seal, a right to all the isles enjoyed by his predecessors.

It appears evident, from this part of the history of *Harold*, and of his father *Olave*, that the Kings of Man held their dominions of the crown of Norway; and we learn from *Matthew Paris**, that a tribute of

before he had made a descent on the Southern Isles pertaining to the King of Man, made a prisoner of *Eagman*, the son of *Godred Chrovan*, whom his father had made governor of the *Nordureys*. *Torfæ. Hist. Orcad.* p. 71.

* *Hist. Norm.* p. 1000.

ten merks of gold * was paid by these vassal Princes to their sovereigns, at the time of their investiture; and that this tribute became due whenever a new monarch happened to obtain the scepter of Norway. It is likewise clear that the more ancient bishops of *Sodor* were under the metropolitical jurisdiction of the archbishops of Drontheim; for though in the treaty concluded between Alexander III. of Scotland, and Magnus IV. of Norway, the patronage of the Sodorian bishopric was vested in the Scottish monarchs, yet the former jurisdiction of Drontheim over it, was by a special article reserved to the archbishops of that see. Accordingly we find that King Alexander sent *Marcus*, the Gallovidian, who had been elected bishop of Man, in the year 1275, to be consecrated or confirmed in his right by his metropolitan in Norway †.

* Spelman, in *Voce Marca*, quotes an author who makes a merk of gold equivalent to fifty of silver. According to other writers to whom the same learned antiquary refers, the merk of gold was sometimes of no greater value than ten merks of silver, and sometimes equal to nine only. But if the tribute due by the Kings of Man to their superior Lords of Norway, was no more than *ten times ten merks* of silver, and that tribute payable only four or five times in a century, King Magnus IV. of Norway, certainly made a profitable bargain when he ceded the Western Isles to Alexander III. of Scotland, for a considerable sum of money paid in four years, together with a yearly tribute or rent, commonly called the Annual of Norway.

† After the Isle of Man had been subdued by the English, the bishopric of Sodor was divided into two. That which was erected in the principal island, and confined to it, fell under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of York. The other, which comprehended all the Ebudes of Scotland, and was established at Iona, became subject to the archbishop of Glasgow.

HAROLD was a Prince of distinguished abilities and many shining virtues. He was highly carested by the Kings of England, and lived in a good understanding with his neighbours of Scotland. Haco courted his friendship much, and after bestowing his daughter on him in the Orkneys, celebrated his nuptials with a royal magnificence at Bergen in Norway †. But while Harold was returning into his own dominions with the Princess his spouse, accompanied by many persons of eminent rank and fortune, he was overtaken by a violent hurricane near Shetland, and perished, together with his whole retinue. This unfortunate event happened in the year 1248, according to Torfæus; but in the year following, if we believe the Chronicle of Man.

SOME time before the death of Harold ‡, Alexander II. King of Scotland, a Prince of great abilities, who desired above all things to extend the limits of his empire, sent two bishops to the court of Norway to reclaim the *Sodoreys*, and the isles to the West of Scotland. This is the language of the Islandic annals, of which Torfæus has given a Latin version. From that passage, as well as from many more in the same annals, we learn distinctly that the *Sodoreys* were no more than a part of the isles called *Ebudes* by the ancients. The Scottish ambassadors executed their commission with great fidelity and zeal, but were dismissed with a categorical refusal. Haco, the son of

† Torfæus Hist. Orcad. p. 164.

‡ Torfæ. Hist. Orcad. p. 163.

the Haco formerly mentioned, told them that all his ancestors, down from Harold Harfager, had an hereditary right to the Western Isles of Scotland, and that he was unalterably determined to maintain it. The two bishops, upon receiving this answer, had recourse to another expedient. After representing the danger attending a rupture with their master, they took it upon them to suggest to the Norwegian monarch, that Alexander, though a Prince of great magnanimity and power, was of too pacific a disposition not to redeem the Ebudes with a sum of money. But Haco replied immediately that he was in no dread from any foreign quarter; that he was at present sufficiently provided with money; in fine, that no offer or temptation of any kind could prevail with him to dismember a province from his empire.

It does not appear that any Scottish King, prior to Alexander II. demanded a restitution of the Western Isles. During the piratical incursions of the Norwegians through the Deucalionian and Irish Seas, it would have been no easy matter to recover those isles, or to keep them if recovered. The revenues arising from them in that early period could not have been considerable, and the attention of the Kings of Scotland was almost constantly employed by intestine commotions, or by uninterrupted wars with foreign enemies. But Alexander, an opulent, wise, and magnanimous Prince, being married to a daughter of England, and in the best understanding with its monarch, formed a resolution of recovering these isles.

After

After negotiations and pacific overtures had failed, he equipped a fleet with an intention of conquering the territories in dispute. But a violent distemper seizing him while engaged in the expedition, he died without having made any progress in the execution of his design. The untimely death of this excellent King happened in the year 1249 *. It is surprising that the Scottish historians should have been strangers to a circumstance so remarkable as the vast preparations made by King Alexander II. to wrest the Ebudes out of the hands of foreign usurpers. They have related at great length the disputes of that Prince with John, King of England; the services done by him to the Barons who fought against that unhappy monarch; the subsequent differences he had with the court of Rome, and with Henry III. together with the manner in which he quelled two or three dangerous rebellions at home: but one of the noblest projects he had ever formed, a project which undoubtedly he would have executed, had heaven prolonged his days for any time, has by these writers been buried in oblivion.

“ALEXANDER, King of Scots, saith the Chronicle of Man, prepared a mighty fleet about this time †, with a view of conquering the isles; but a fever seized him in the isle of Kerwaray ‡, of which he died.”

* Chron. Man. Torfæ. Hist. Orcad. p. 64.

† That is in the year 1249.

‡ On the coast of Lorn.

THE old Islandic historian, translated by Torfæus, gives a more particular account of this grand design. " Alexander, of Scotland, saith that writer, actuated by a strong passion of extending his dominions, raised forces throughout all his territories, and boasted that he would not lay down his arms till he had reannexed the Ebudes to the kingdom already in his possession. He also held forth that he would subdue Orkney and Shetland. To succeed the better in this undertaking, he began to tamper with one of the Hebridian Kings, *Jon* or *John*, the son of Dugal of Lorn, and grandson of Somerled, Thane of Argyle. Haco had committed the impregnable fort of Kiarnaburgh *, and two or three other castles of great importance, to this John. Alexander offered him much larger possessions than those he had obtained from the King of Norway, provided he would deliver up the fort and castles. But the Hebridian chief, in spite of the importunities of his friends, and all the ample promises made to him, continued faithful to his master. Alexander, not discouraged by this repulse, prosecuted his design, and invaded the isles. But while he lay in the bay of *Rialarsund* †, saith Torfæus, after his author, he had a very extraordinary vision and soon after died ‡.

* The true name of the fort is Kiamaburgh; it lay in a small rocky isle near the coast of Mull.

† The *Rialarsund* of the Islandic historian, is the island Kiararey near the Sound of Mull, where Alexander died, as we learn from the epitaph inscribed on his tomb, in the abby church of Melrofs. See Abercromby's Life of Alexander II.

‡ Three men approached Alexander when asleep in his bed. These phantoms were St. Olaus, King of Norway, St. Magnus, Earl of Orkney,

ABOUT the time of Alexander's death, *Harold*, the son of *Godred the Brown*, and grandson of that Reginald who had formerly reigned in Man, assumed the title of King of the Isles. But his reign was tyrannical and short. Summoned by his paramount Lord to appear before him, he found himself under the necessity of repairing to Norway, and was imprisoned there for his usurpation and cruelties *.

HACO, upon receiving intelligence that his daughter and son-in-law, *Harold*, the son of *Olave the Black*, had unfortunately perished, committed the administration of all public affairs in the Ebudes to *John*, the son of *Dugal*, and grandson of *Somerled*, till some one of the blood royal could be conveniently sent into that province †. But John arriving in Man, assumed the regal title, without regarding either his master's

Orkney, and St. Columba, abbot of Iona. The first of these being a person of great stature, with a red coloured face, and clad with a royal apparel, looked him full with a stern and terrible look. The second was in his appearance younger, wonderfully handsome and very richly dressed. The third, who was taller than the rest, and very violent in his manner, asked the King, in a most wrathful tone, whether he really intended to invade the Ebudes? Alexander answering in the affirmative, the phantom advised him, at his peril, to drop that design and return home. After the King had related this awful dream to those about him, the wisest of his council dissuaded him very earnestly from the prosecution of his design: but persisting in his former resolution, he was attacked by a violent distemper which soon made an end of his life and rash project together. Vide *Torfæ. Hist. Orcad.* p. 163, 164.

* Chron. Man. ad ann. 1249.

† *Torfæ. Hist. Orcad.* p. 164.
instructions

instructions or the inclinations of the people. But the people highly provoked by this indignity, and firmly attached, at the same time, to their lawful Prince, drove the usurper out of the island, and having soon after concerted matters with their neighbours, declared Magnus, the son of Olave, their King*; and Haco recognized his title. John, disappointed in his ambitious views by the exaltation of a rival, began to hearken to the advantageous offer of the Scottish monarch. Alexander II. had in vain employed the strongest solicitations and amplest promises to corrupt him†; but the conjuncture was now more favourable; and Alexander III. had all the success he could desire in seducing John from his allegiance to his sovereign.

THE Scottish and Norwegian historians give contradictory accounts of the manner in which the Western Isles were reunited to the dominions belonging to the crown, in the reign of Alexander III. Buchanan's account is as follows:

“ IN the year 1263, *Acho*, King of Norway, having approached the coast of Kyle with a fleet of one hundred and sixty ships, landed twenty thousand men near a town of that district called *Air*. His pretext for making war upon the Scots was, that some of the isles which had been promised to his ancestors by *Donald Bane*, had not been given up. These were Bute, Arran,

* Chron. Man. ad ann. 1250. † Torfæ. Hist. Orcad. p. 164.

and the two Cumras, places which had never been reckoned in the number of the Ebudes. But to one who wanted only some colour of reason for making war; it was enough that these places were islands. Acho reduced the two largest of them before any opposition could have been made to the purpose. Elated by this success, he made a descent upon *Cunningham*, and engaging in battle with the Scots, in a place called *Larges*, was overpowered by their superior numbers, and reduced to the shameful necessity of flying with the greatest precipitation to his ships. But the loss of that battle was not his only misfortune: A violent tempest destroyed the greatest part of his fleet, immediately after the action was over; and it was with no small difficulty that he made his escape into the Orkneys with a few ships that remained after that calamity. The Norwegians left sixteen thousand men in the field of battle, and the Scots five.

“ ACHO, overwhelmed with grief upon the loss of his army, and the death of a favourite youth, distinguished by his valour, died soon after. His son, Magnus, who had lately come over from Norway, seeing things in a much more desperate situation than he expected, and as he could not get any new supplies from home before the spring season, was willing to terminate the quarrel by a definitive treaty of peace: There were several reasons which confirmed him in this disposition. The Islanders were disaffected, and those on the continent of Scotland, on whose assistance his father had laid no small stress, had entirely abandoned

doned his interest. *Man* had been already reduced by the enemy, and it was very probable that the other isles were soon to follow the same fate.

“MAGNUS was easily determined by so many weighty considerations to offer a peace: but Alexander would not hearken to any propositions made by the Norwegian ambassadors, till it should be previously agreed that the Ebudes should be ceded to him, and annexed to his crown for ever. This preliminary article having been at last admitted, a final pacification was concluded on the following terms: That the King of Scots should immediately pay four thousand merks of silver to his brother of Norway, as an equivalent for the Ebudes, of which the latter made a total renunciation, and together with that sum, an annual tax of an hundred merks of silver, was to be paid by Alexander, and his successors, to Magnus, and his. It was further stipulated, that Margaret, the daughter of the former, should marry Hungonan, the son of the latter, as soon as their ages should permit*.”

IN this manner were the Western Isles recovered by Alexander III. of Scotland, and upon these terms ceded by Magnus of Norway, if we are to give faith implicitly to the Scottish historians.

BUT the account given by Torfæus of the matter, after the authors of his country, and the public records kept there, is in substance this.

* Buchan. Rer. Scot. Hist. lib. vii. cap. 62, 63.

“ IN the year 1263, the petty Kings of the Sodorian isles acquainted their sovereign Haco of Norway, that *Kiarnach*, Earl of Ross, had committed the most cruel devastations in their territories, that he had destroyed many of their towns, villages, monasteries and churches, and that he had in the most barbarous manner killed all the people that fell in his way, without any distinction of age or sex. They notified further, that the King of Scots had declared he would never desist till all the Ebudes possessed by the Norwegians should be reunited to his dominions *.

“ HACO, a Prince of uncommon abilities, and of a military genius, heard all this with a becoming indignation; and having without loss of time fitted out a vast fleet, set sail for Scotland, on the 11th of July 1263. He arrived in Shetland on the 13th, and staid there for two weeks; and after having settled his affairs in Orkneys and Caithness, steered his course first for the Lewis, and afterwards for Sky. Here he was joined by Magnus, King of Man, and by Dugal, one of those great Lords in the isles, who had assumed the regal title. Haco was piloted by this vassal King to the Sound of Mull, and from *Mull* to *Kiarary*. He had ordered all his ships of war to rendezvous in this isle, and here he received a considerable accession of strength by the junction of a fleet which the Islanders had brought to his aid.

* Torfæ. Hist. Orcad. p. 165.

“ WHILE Haco was settling his plan of operations at *Kiarary*, he detached a squadron of fifty ships to the isthmus of Kintyre, and another consisting of fifteen to the isle of Bute. The first was commanded by Magnus, King of Man, and Dugal, the Sodorian Prince already mentioned. Three or four Norwegian Captains, and one of the Ebudensian Chieftains commanded the other. These two squadrons had all the success that could be desired. The conquest of Kintyre was finished in a short time. Two Lords who bore the greatest sway in that province delivered it up to the Norwegians, swore fealty to Haco, and brought in a thousand bullocks for the use of his army. The castle of Bute surrendered, and the whole island was subdued, and a considerable body of troops sent from it did no small damage on the continent of Scotland.

“ WHILE Haco lay before the isle of Arran, after having reduced all the other Ebudes*, the King of Scots sent ambassadors to him with propositions of peace. The Norwegian monarch, after receiving several different messages in the same stile, began to listen to the overtures made, and sent two bishops and three laics of distinguished talents, invested with a public character to settle all differences. Alexander was in appearance fond of an accommodation, but insisted peremptorily that Arran, Bute, and Camray, should be restored to the crown of Scotland. Haco, unwilling to grant such advantageous terms, and perceiving that he had been too long

* Torfæ. Hist. Orcad. p. 166.

amused with the insidious promises of an enemy, who had been spinning out the time with affected delays, till he could draw a more numerous army together, broke off the treaty, and recommenced hostilities. He had in vain made a new proposal, that he and the King of Scotland should meet in a certain place, at the head of their respective forces, and either settle a lasting peace, or terminate their differences in a pitched battle.

“HACO finding that his enemy had only made an equivocal declaration, in answer to this generous proposal, sent Magnus and Dugal of the Isles, together with some more of his general officers, at the head of a fleet, consisting of sixty sail, and a numerous body of land forces, into the bay of *Skipafjord* *. These generals having landed their troops, penetrated into the country—destroyed all the villages around *Loknlovie*—laid waste a country from which one of the Scottish earls derived his title, and carried back all the plunder they could find to their ships.”

* *Skipafjord* is a Norwegian word, which signifies, according to Torfæus, the *Bay of ships*. In the confines of the shires of Argyle and Dumbarton there is a bay which is now called *Loch loung*, a Galic word, of the same import with the *Skipafjord* of the Norse. Unless this *Loch-loung* be the bay meant by Torfæus, and the writer whom he translates, it must be the bay of *Greenock*. Each of these bays lies at a small distance only from *Lokn-love*, i. e. *Loch-lomond*, a large fresh-water lake, that abounds with islands, agreeably to the account given of it by the Norwegian writers. The tract of land which, according to the same writers, gave his title to a Scottish earl, must be the county of Lennox, or some part of it: it cannot be either Lorn or Lochaber, as Torfæus imagined.

WHILE

WHILE the squadron commanded by Magnus lay in the bay of *Skipafjord*, a terrible tempest destroyed a great part of it—the grand fleet lying at the same time before an island, in the mouth of the Clyde it may be presumed, five transports were driven from their anchors, and wrecked on the coast of Scotland. It was with extreme difficulty “ that Haco’s own galley was saved. The Scots seeing so many of the Norwegian vessels stranded, came down to the shore in great numbers, and attacked them ; but the Norwegians, supported by a reinforcement sent from the fleet, defended themselves with extraordinary valour, and maintained a desperate fight throughout all the night, till the Scots found it convenient to retire.”

ON the following day, Haco, notwithstanding the manifest disadvantages of every kind to which his people were exposed, formed a resolution of landing, either to share the same fate with his distressed forces on shore, or to relieve them out of such imminent danger. But the chief man of his council and army persuaded him to keep the sea, and send new supplies of men to the party ashore. As the storm continued to rage without any intermission, it was not in his power to land more than eight hundred men, who had ten times their number to encounter. They fought, however, with undaunted resolution and vigour for a whole day. The enemy gave way in the evening, and withdrew to a place of safety. The Norwegians pursued them, and after having dislodged them, retired to their ships, and joined their companions.

“ THE day after this engagement, Haco took up the bodies of the Norwegians who had been slain, and buried them in holy ground.—The winter now approaching, he left the isle before which his fleet lay, and steered his course for the North. In the course of his voyage through the Ebudes, he dismissed Magnus, Dugal, and several other Sodorian lords, and appointed governors over the isles and forts, of which he had made himself master. He arrived safe in the Orkneys, and died soon after at Kirkwall *.”

A NORWEGIAN historian animadverts, with some degree of severity on the Chronicle of Man, as well as upon the Scottish writers, for asserting that Haco effected nothing in this expedition; and I incline to think he had great reason. It is hardly possible to believe that the battle of *Larges*, if ever such a battle was fought, was so very fatal to the Norwegians as is represented by the Scottish historians. Their loss amounted to sixteen thousand men, according to Buchanan, but twenty-five thousand, according to Boece; and neither of these writers could determine whether the Scottish army was commanded on that occasion by *Alexander the Third* in person, or by *Alexander Stewart*, the great grandfather of *King Robert the Second*. From that and other circumstances it may be fairly concluded, that the records, or rather perhaps traditionary reports, from which they drew their account of Haco's misfortunes, must have been very imperfect.

* Torfæ. Hist. Orcad. p. 166, 167, &c.

IF the Norwegian fleet had been almost totally destroyed by a tempest; if the greatest part of Haco's land forces had been cut off in the battle of *Larges*; if the Isle of Man had been reduced by King Alexander the Third of Scotland; and if a spirit of dissatisfaction generally prevailed in the other Ebu-des; all which is alledged by our Scottish historians; it is strange that Magnus, the son and successor of Haco, with these and several other manifest disadvantages on his side, could have been able to procure a peace, in every respect more honourable to him than to the other contracting power. In vain has it been objected by Abercromby *, that Magnus would never have given up the acquisitions supposed to have been made of Bute, Arran and the Comras, together with Man and the other Isles, if his father had effected any thing considerable.—Magnus was young, a stranger to the art of war, and of a pacific disposition. The Ebudes lay at a great distance from the seat of his empire. The revenue sent from these isles into his exchequer amounted only to ten merks of gold, and that was paid only at the accession of a new monarch. The expence to which his crown had been put in the late King's time, for securing these remote and unprofitable territories, would have probably overbalanced all the duties collected there since the days of Harold Harfager. Besides all this, we learn from a Norwegian Chronicle, cited by Torfæus, that in the year immediately after Haco's death, the King of Scotland sent some friars to treat with

* Mart. Atch. vol. i. p. 323.

Magnus concerning the Isles; a circumstance hardly credible, had his father's army and fleet received so heavy a blow.

A PEACE at length was concluded at *Perth*, in the year 1266; Alexander the Third of Scotland being present, together with his clergy and nobles, while the chancellor of Norway and one of his barons represented King Magnus. The principal articles of the treaty were, That the Kings of Norway should lay no further claim to *Man*, or to the *Sodorian Isles*:—That these should for ever belong to the Kings of Scotland, with all the superiorities, homages, rents, services, and other rights pertaining to them, together with the patronage of the bishopric of *Man*; saving at the same time to the church of *Drontheim* her metropolitical jurisdiction over that see:—That the inhabitants of the isles ceded to the crown of Scotland should enjoy all the heritages and privileges formerly granted to them by the Kings of Norway, without being brought to account for any thing they had done before that time in favour of their old masters:—And that the said inhabitants should be governed for the future by the Kings of Scotland, and subject to its laws, unless any of them should incline to reside elsewhere; in which case, they were to have full liberty to remove unmolested with their effects.

ON the other hand, King Alexander obliged himself and his successors to pay, as an equivalent for
 5 the

the renunciation made by his brother Magnus, four thousand merks sterling, within four years, from the date of the treaty—together with an annual pension of one hundred merks sterling, to be paid in the church of St. Magnus in the Orkneys, by Alexander and his successors, to the King of Norway and his successors for ever.

WE are told by the Scottish historians, that to establish this peace upon the most solid foundation, another article was inserted in the treaty, by which the contracting parties obliged themselves reciprocally to marry *Hungonan*, the son of Magnus, to *Margaret*, the eldest daughter of Alexander. But the son of Magnus who married the Lady Margaret of Scotland, was not called *Hungonan*, but Eric; and he was not born till the year 1270, that is, four years after the peace had been concluded at Perth*. So very ill informed were the Scottish writers with regard to almost all the disputes and transactions between Alexander, Haco, and Magnus †.

THEY.

* See the contract of marriage between Eric and Margaret, inter *Fœdera Angliæ*, tom. xi. p. 1079.

† It is not improper to observe that Abercromby, the first of our historians who gave, and perhaps could have given, the Norwegian account of these districts and transactions, is far from being exact in the relation of them, which he drew out of Torfæus. He was either in too great hurry, or too much under the influence of national prejudice, while translating that author. His complaint, that the names of the isles through which he made his progress, are very different, in the Norwegian Journal, from those now given them by the Scots, is not altogether just;

THEY give us a long account of the mighty feats performed in Man by Alexander, lord high steward of Scotland, and John Cummin, earl of Badenoch, who had been sent thither by Alexander the Third; and of the vigorous resistance made by Magnus, then King of Man and the Isles, in defence of his people and crown. But the author of the Chronicle of Man, who lived in that very period, makes no mention of these things. After relating that Magnus, the son of Olave, King of Man and the Isles, died at his castle of Ruffin in the year 1265, he adds, in the very next sentence, that the kingdom of the Isles was translated in the following year to Alexander, King of Scots.—Whence we may conclude, that the Scottish historians must have been misled in their relation of these matters, as well as in the account they give us at the same time of the conquest of all the Western

just; and were it more so, the objection would signify little. To those who know the situation of the isles through which Haco passed, and have at the same time any notion of the Galic and Norse, the Journal is abundantly intelligible, and worthy of credit. The author of it seems to have assisted in the expedition, and to have been a spectator of every place and action. He may indeed have extenuated the losses sustained by his countrymen upon that occasion: but surely an objection of greater force may be made upon the same head, against the veracity of those writers who have appeared on the other side of the question.

I add further from Torfæus, that *Sturles*, an eminent poet, cotemporary with Haco, gave a full description of the expedition in heroic verse, and that the greatest part of his composition was extant in that author's time: if so, the Norwegian annals seem in this matter to be preferable to those of Scotland.

Isles

Isles by the lord high steward of Scotland, the earls of Athol, March and Carnock, together with the thanes of Argyle and Lennox. If this conquest had been made before the treaty of Perth, it is matter of no small wonder that the King of Scots should have granted such extraordinary conditions on that occasion to his adversary of Norway. If after it, one can hardly believe that the petty Kings, lords and chieftains of the Isles, men whose territories lay at considerable distances from one another, men distracted in their councils, all too feeble to contend with a powerful Monarch in their neighbourhood, if closely united, and all perfectly sensible that Magnus had abandoned them for ever, could have thought of making any resistance against their new master, especially as their late sovereign had secured their estates, privileges and rights of every kind, in the strongest manner. This and Buchanan's silence considered, I am apt to suspect, that this conquest received all the existence it ever had from the invention of Boece, who has, in too many instances, forgotten or neglected the first rule which an historian should have in view.

WE learn indeed from the little Chronicle so often quoted, that the people of Man, four years after all the Ebudes had been ceded by Magnus of Norway, to Alexander, King of Scots, fought with great spirit, though unsuccessfully, against an army sent by that Monarch to reduce them *. From that time, till the

* Chron. Mann. ad ann. 1270.

crown of Scotland, with all the dominions pertaining to it, was extorted from the unhappy John Baliol, by Edward the First of England, the Isle of Man continued in the possession of the Scots. But about the latter end of King Edward's reign, one of the family of Montacute, who was of the blood royal of Man, saith Cambden †, having raised a body of English adventurers, asserted his right to the island by force of arms, and drove the Scots out of it: but having plunged himself into a vast debt by the expence attending this conquest, he mortgaged the island to the famous *Anthony Bee*, bishop of Durham, and patriarch of Jerufalem. Some time after the death of this bishop, Edward the Second made over the kingdom of Man to his favourite Peter de Gaveston; and when that minion could no longer enjoy the grant, gave it to Henry de Beaumont, *with all the demesnes and royal jurisdiction thereunto belonging* ‡.

IN the year 1313, Robert Bruce, King of Scots, after having besieged the castle of Ruffin, which was bravely defended by the English, took it at last, reduced the whole island of Man, and made his nephew, Randolph earl of Murray, lord of it.—Randolph, upon receiving this title, assumed the arms of the later Kings of that island. The arms of the older Kings of Man, I mean those of the Norwegian race, were, a ship with its sails furled, and the title in their seals was, *Rex Manniæ & Insularum* §. The arms of the later Kings were three human legs linked together.

† Cambden, in his Continuation of the history of Man.

‡ Cambden, ibidem.

§ Cambden, ibidem.

IN the unfortunate reign of David Bruce, *William Montacute*, earl of Salisbury, recovered Man out of the hands of the *Randolph* family, and in a little time sold it, together with the crown thereof, to *William Scrope*. Upon the confiscation of Scrope's estate, Henry the IV. of England bestowed the island and lordship of Man upon Henry Piercy, earl of Northumberland. But Piercy having been attainted, in about four years after this grant, the Isle devolved, by the King's favour, upon the *Stanley* family. It is almost needless to add, that the earls of Derby, of that family, enjoyed the title of *Kings and Lords of Man*, for many ages, till the sovereignty of it fell, by female succession, to the family of Athol.

THE vast Continental estate of Sumerled, thane of Argyle, and the large acquisitions he had made in the Isles, at the expence of his brother-in-law, devolved wholly, some time after his death, on his two sons, Dugal and Reginald. The lordship of Argyle fell to the share of the former, together with the extensive island of Mull, and some others of inferior note. The latter had Kintyre, Ila, and several more of the smaller Ebudes. The successors of these two brothers, while the kingdom of Man and the Isles remained in the hands of Norwegian Princes, like these their allies, neighbours, and sometimes masters, assumed the highest titles, and made an extraordinary figure for many ages. We have already seen that John, the son of Dugal, the same who had revolted over to Alexander the Third, was dignified with the name of *King*. The posterity of Reginald had pre-

tenfions equally good to that appellation, and were more than equally able to fupport them. They accordingly bore the regal title for a long time. While the more immediate defcendants of Sumerled poffeffed the *Sodorian Ifles*, with a kind of royal jurifdiction, the *Nordureys*, or the ifles to the North of Ardnamurchan, were governed by the viceroys fent thither by the Kings of Man. Thefe viceroys or governors were generally the fons, or brothers, or kinfmen of the reigning Princes. Of one of thofe lieutenants are defcended the *MacLeods*; a family once very powerful in the Northern divifion of the Ebudes. Their defcent from the Kings of Man appears not only from tradition, and the genealogical tables of the fennachies, but likewise from the arms of the family; one branch of the two into which it has been divided, about five centuries back, retaining the *three united legs*, and the other *a fhip with its fails furred*.

BESIDES the petty Kings and powerful chieftains fprung from Sumerled and the Nordureian governors, there were, in the two feveral divifions of the Western Ifles, many confiderable families; fome of a Scottish extraction, and others originally Norwegians. At the head of each of thefe families was a perfon of high dignity and importance among his own people. His ordinary title was *Tiërna*, or *Armin*, two words of much the fame fignification; the firft of them belonging to the Galic tongue, the fecond to the Teutonic. We learn from Torfæus and the Highland
fenna-

fennachies, as well as from many passages in the Chronicle of Man, that these *Tierns* or *Armins*, called frequently the great men of the Isles in that Chronicle, were much employed in the administration of public affairs, and of the utmost consequence at the time of electing Kings and governors.

It appears from an express article of the pacification of Perth, above inserted, that Magnus took care to secure the estates, privileges and rights of all the great men in the Isles, whether petty Kings, Chieftains, or Armins. It was provided in the same article, that these great men, and all the other inhabitants of the isles, should be subject to the Kings of Scotland, and governed by the laws and customs of that realm for ever. But to me there seems to be no great temerity in affirming, that the Isles were almost entirely independent of the Scottish empire, and totally unrestrained by its laws for about two centuries after that transaction. The lords and great chieftains were absolute monarchs within their little principalities: all the laws known among their people were, the arbitrary will and pleasure of their masters, the decisions of ignorant brehons, the canons made by their priests, abbots and bishops, some strange customs descended to them from their ancestors the Caledonians, and some feudal institutions left among them by the Norwegians.

It does not appear that the great men of the Isles paid any pecuniary taxes to the government of Scot-

land during the period I have mentioned, or joined their arms with their sovereign against his enemies, till after the middle of the fifteenth century. The destructive wars, foreign and domestic, in which the whole nation was miserably involved during that time, put a stop to almost all legal proceedings in the heart of the kingdom, and much more in remote corners. Amidst these distractions, and the disrespect to laws necessarily attending them, it could not have been expected that Islanders, who enjoyed a sort of régál authority at home, and had nothing to fear from abroad, would have spontaneously burdened themselves, or their people, with any public duties. Upon the whole, it is hard to say how far King Alexander III. established his authority in the Isles; and after the death of that excellent Prince, and while the fatal disputes consequent upon it did remain, the Sodorian and Nordurcian lords had the best opportunities they could desire of enlarging their power, and rendering themselves independent.

ANGUS, Lord of the Isles, was led by political reasons, as well as by motives of a more laudable kind, to engage in the cause of Robert Bruce. When that illustrious Prince, after the unhappy battle of *Methven*, had fled into the Western Highlands, pursued by the force of an English Monarch, extremely formidable, and unable to secure a safe retreat in any other part of his own dominions, Angus received him into his castle of Saddle, protected him there for some time, and furnished him

with boats, to transport himself, and his small party of trusty friends, into an obscure isle on the coast of Ireland.

WHEN fortune began to smile a little on the royal adventurer, Angus assisted him with the utmost alacrity in recovering his paternal estate of Carrick; and when every thing was at stake for the last time, the honour and life of his sovereign, the freedom and independency of his country, the existence of his friends and fellow patriots, all in the most imminent danger of being swallowed up by a prodigious army of foreigners, he joined him at Bannockburn with five thousand men, say the Highland fennachies, and did him a most substantial service upon that occasion.

AFTER Robert had fully established his authority in every part of his dominions, he gave to Angus several marks of an extraordinary regard. However sensible the King might have been that it was highly impolitic to increase the power of a lord of the Isles, he bestowed on his old friend, perhaps from a principle of gratitude, a considerable part of the estates formerly belonging to the Cummins of Lochaber and MacDougals of Lorn, two families that had deserved very ill of him, and had for that reason been forfeited.

THE grandson of this Angus, John, lord of the Isles, adopting a very different system, abandoned
the

the interest of David Bruce, and espoused the cause of Edward Baliol. Having obtained from that Prince, while acting the part of a Scottish King, a right to all or most of the Ebudes, after vindicating that right by the superiority of his strength, he began to aspire after a regal authority at home, and in pursuance of that design, entered into a formal alliance with that powerful Prince, Edward the Third of England. But returning afterwards to his allegiance to his natural sovereign, Robert the Second of Scotland confirmed all the rights of his family, whether old or recent, and gave him his daughter in marriage.—Donald his son of that marriage was the famous Lord of the Isles, who added the earldom of Ross to the vast possessions left by his ancestors, fought the battle of Harlaw, to defend that acquisition, against the duke of Albany's army, and maintained his title, in spite of all the efforts made by those in the administration of that time.

THE two immediate successors of Donald were either too powerful to be loyal subjects, or too much the objects of public jealousy and private resentment to be left in the undisturbed possession of their overgrown estates. John, the last of these great lords, provoked by injuries received from the court of Scotland, either really or in imagination, deluded at the same time out of his duty by the Douglasses, and bribed withal by Edward the Fourth of England, who took care to feed his immoderate ambition with the amplest promises, exerted his whole strength in
sub-

subverting the established government of his country, and in the end proved the ruin of his own family's greatness. He lost the earldom of Ross, together with many other considerable tracts of land which he had possessed in different parts of the Continent, and was of course reduced to a mediocrity of fortune, which disabled him effectually from being any longer formidable. The other chieftains and great men of the Isles, who had been long the obsequious vassals, or at best the impotent neighbours of Sumerled's posterity, embraced so favourable an opportunity of asserting their liberties, procured new rights to their estates from the crown, and became from that time forth useful subjects.

THIS vast diminution of that almost unbounded power, of which the lords of the Isles had been possessed for some ages, happened in the reign of James the Third, and after the middle of the fifteenth century.

DISSERTATION XVII.

Of some Monuments of Antiquity in the Western Islands of Scotland. Occasional Observations upon the Genius, Manners, and Customs, of the Hebridian Scots of the Middle Ages.

THE counties of Dumbarton and Argyle, were the theatre of the first campaign of Julius Agricola in Caledonia. It is therefore probable, that considerable detachments of the Roman army passed over from the continent into some of the Southern Ebudes. It may likewise be taken for granted, that Agricola's fleet, in its return to South Britain, through the Deucaledonian Sea, was more than once under a necessity of refitting in some of the many excellent harbours of the Northern Ebudes. But whether the Romans took any long stay in those places or not, it is certain that they have not left any monuments of antiquity there. The Norwegians and Druids are the only people who have left the least vestige of themselves behind them in those islands.

THE circles of stones so often mentioned by Offian, and so frequent in the Northern Ebudes, were the
works

works of the Pictish Druids, and though simple in their construction, are not unworthy of the attention of the curious. They were the temples in which the old heathenish priests, employed by our ancestors in the service of their idols, performed the most solemn offices of their superstition. There are many of these temples to be met with in the Eastern Ebuda of Ptolemy, now called the Isle of Sky. In the language of the country they are generally called Druidical houses; and though the inhabitants have but a very confused idea of Druidism, still they agree in calling the circles holy places, and sometimes give them the name of temples *.

THAT the Caledonians, as well as other Celtic nations, worshipped the sun under the name of Grannius, admits of no doubt. An inscription, not many years since dug out of the ruins of the Roman prætenture between the friths of Forth and Clyde, is a demonstration that the sun was one of the deities of Cale-

* About half a century back, a farmer in the isle of Sky imagined he had very good reasons for removing his houses from that part of his farm where they formerly stood, to another part which he found had been once occupied by the Druids, and was consequently more auspicious. The farmer was remarkably industrious, and had of course more than ordinary success in his business. The consequence of his success was, that almost all his neighbours removed their houses to the consecrated hillocks and circles which tradition had named after the Druids, nor would they permit the least stone in these temples to be touched for fear of disobliging the genius of the place; so unconquerable are the remains of a once prevalent superstition.

donia. Grannius is manifestly derived from *Grian**, the Galic word for the sun. That those circles of stone I have mentioned were constructed for the worship of the sun seems to me evident, from a circumstance communicated to me by a learned friend in the county of Inverness.

IN the confines between two districts of that county, called Badenoch and Strathspey, is a very extensive and barren heath, through which the river Spey runs. On this heath are still to be seen entire, many of those Druidical circles of stone. The name of the heath is *Slia-ghrannas*, which, literally translated, is the *heath of Grannius*. No person in that country understood the etymon of *Slia-ghrannas*, till my friend passed that way. The country round about this place was called of old, and by some of the vulgar to this day, *Gbriantochd*, or the country of *Grannius*. Some people imagined that *Gbriantochd* had its name from a Highland clan called *Grants*, who possess that country. To me it appears much more probable that the *Grants*, in Galic called *Griantich*, had their name from the country, and not from a pretended *Legrand*, as the genealogists of that tribe affirm.

IN some parts of the continent of Scotland, the Druidical holy places consist of two or three circles

* *Grian* seems to me to be derived from *Gré* or *Gné*, signifying the *nature*, and *thein*, the oblique case of *tein*, fire. In the Galic language, a consonant before an *h* or aspiration is always quiescent, so that *Gre thein* must be pronounced *Grè-ein*, i. e. *The essence or natural source of fire*. Should this etymon appear unjust, the editor, and not the author of the *Dissertations*, is to be blamed for it.

which

which have the same common center, and greatly resemble, though in miniature, the famous Stonehenge in Salisbury plains. I have not seen any such double or triple circumvallations in the islands, but have more than once observed one stone broader than any one of those which form the circle, stand detached from it at a certain distance. This broad stone is placed towards the East, with a cavity in the top, and a fissure either natural or artificial in one of its sides: these hollows were perhaps intended for receiving the libations offered to their Gods. The largest stones in the circumference of the Druidical circles which I had occasion to see in the Western islands are about three feet and a half above the ground, and near three feet broad. The diameter of the greatest area is about thirty feet. There is something agreeably romantic in the situations chosen for these temples. The scene is frequently melancholy and wild, the prospect is extensive but not diversified. A fountain and the noise of a distant river were always esteemed as requisite neighbours for those seats of dark and enthusiastic religion.

THOSE large heaps of stones which are called *Cairns* in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, are very numerous in the Ebudes. There are no less than seven such piles within the confines of a little village in the isle of Sky. All cairns are not of a similar construction: Those which depart most from the common form are called *Barpinin*, in the language of the country; these resemble the Barrows of England. The word *Barp* or *Barrow* is originally Norwegian. *Cairn* is a British

word, which signifies a heap of stones, either lying together in the greatest confusion, or piled up in some sort of order. I have seen some of these heaps that are three hundred feet in circumference at the base, and about twenty feet perpendicular in height. They are formed conically, and consist of stones of almost all sizes, as chance or the materials of the place directed. They lie generally near small arms of the sea which run into the land and receive rivers. They are always placed near the common road, and upon rising grounds. The motives which induced the builders to rear up these piles in such places, were the advantage of the stones, and a desire of exciting the traveller's admiration and devotion. Various have been the opinions of the learned concerning the intention of those *Cairns*, and concerning the people by whom they were collected. Some will have them to have been made by way of trophies, or with a view of perpetuating the memory of heroes slain in battle. Some conjecture that they were monuments erected by wayfaring men in honour of Mercury, the protector of travellers. Others fancy that they were seats of judicature for the old Brehons: and others are of opinion that they were the eminences on which our old Kings stood after their election; so as to exhibit themselves to the multitude. One or two critics have imagined that they were no more than boundaries which divided the estate of one great Lord from that of another: and many have thought that they were intended only for burial places.

THE last of these opinions is undoubtedly the justest. The sepulchral urns always found in every Cairn that

has been hitherto examined, are sufficient to demonstrate the truth of it. These urns are deposited in large stone coffins, which lie in the center of the barrow. The coffin consists of six rude flat stones; one in the bottom, two in the sides, two more in the ends, and another larger one above. There is sometimes a kind of obelisk which overtops the barrow, and stands at the head of the coffin. The coffins are generally more than six feet long, and the urns which they contain are half full of ashes and bones. The workmanship of these vessels is rather coarse than otherwise*.

It is a question whether the Cairns were reared by the Norwegians or old Britains of Caledonia: there are Cairns in the different parts of the continent of Scotland, particularly in the Highland districts of the coun-

* It is not above fifty years since the Islanders understood that the barrows were the repositories of the dead. Much about that time a gentleman in one of the isles having occasion for stones to build a house, broke down one of these old fabrics, and coming to the bottom of it, near the center, lighted on the large flat stone which formed the cover of the coffin. Upon comparing a current tradition with the contrivance of the stones, and the sound emitted from them, he immediately concluded that here was a stone chest which contained a quantity of hidden treasure: full of this agreeable fancy, and dreading much at the same time that a person of much greater authority in the country would infallibly deprive him of the treasure, if the secret should once transpire, he obliged the workmen, by the interposition of a most solemn oath, to conceal the happy discovery. After this point was settled, and a reasonable dividend promised to every one of the workmen, the coffin was opened with due care: but the treasure found in it gave very little satisfaction, being no more than a small quantity of ashes contained in a yellow-coloured earthen vessel.

ties of Aberdeen and Inverness, into which neither the Norwegians nor Danes ever penetrated. Besides, the mountains of Carnarvonshire have many monuments of the same kind. It is therefore evident, that the old Britains erected some of these fabrics; nor can it be affirmed that the Norwegians were strangers to the same art. We are told by Pomponius Mela, that the Druids burned and interred the bodies of their departed friends *. And Sir James Ware quotes a passage from an ancient book of canons, from which it appears that the old Irish buried their dead in the same manner.

WE learn from the epitaph of the robber, Balista, and from several passages in other ancient authors, that malefactors were sometimes buried under heaps of stones. It is certain that the barrows in the isles were intended for illustrious persons, or those of the highest dignity among the people. The expence of time and labour, to which these huge piles must have subjected the builders, together with the coffins and urns found within them, leave no room for a doubt in this matter. In one of these barrows which I saw broke open, there were found four different coffins placed at some distance from a larger one in the centre. Each of these contained an urn with ashes and some half burnt bones. The coffin or chest in the middle was certainly the repository of a great Chieftain or King, and those around belonged to persons who were either his near relations, or heroes of a less exalted character.

* De Situ Orb. lib. iii. cap. 2.

THERE is a proverbial expression common in the Highlands and islands to this day, from which we may form a conjecture of the manner of erecting these piles, and the use for which they were intended. The expression is, *I shall add a stone to your Cairn**; that is to say, I shall do your memory all the honour in my power, when you are no more. I shall contribute to raise your monument. This is the language of petitioners, when sensible the favours they ask cannot in all probability be sufficiently acknowledged till after the benefactor's death. The religious belief of these times obliged every pious traveller to add a stone to the pile of the dead. The larger the stone the more to the honour of the departed spirit which was thought to hover around his heap, and to rejoice over the piety of the traveller. If the Cairn belonged to a man of distinguished merit, who died in the cause of his tribe, or was reared in memory of a famous bard, the whole community came on appointed days to increase the pile, and send it down with lustre to posterity. Hence we may account for the bulk of those little hills, though reared in times when carriages and mechanical engines of all kinds were little known.

AMONG all the monuments of antiquity found in the Western Islands, the ruinous forts, so frequent there, deserve the first notice. The irregular and uncommon construction, the similarity of their magnificent situations, and the almost unintelligible pecu-

* Curri mi cloch er do charne.

liarities of their workmanship, seem to render them very curious objects for antiquaries.

THESE forts are, in the language of the isles, called *Duns*, in that of the Norwegians, *Burghs*, and in the Irish, *Raths*. The first of these names is a Celtic word, which signifies a hill or eminence in almost all languages *. It was customary among the ancient nations to build their castles or places of defence upon high grounds, in order to discover the enemy before he approached, and to repel his assaults with greater facility. When the inconveniences of such situations appeared, the places of defence were built in low grounds; but they still retained the old names of *Duns*, *Raths*, *Burghs* or *Bergs* †.

It will be no easy matter to prove that the Caledonians, Picts, or ancient Scots of Britain, had stone edifices of any kind. The case was the same with the Irish, till after the Normans were settled among them: and before Alfred's time there was scarce a royal palace, or a house for divine worship in England, built of any other materials than timber ‡.

SOME perhaps will be surprized to hear that the piratical nations of Scandinavia should have understood

* See Bull. Dict. Celt. vol. i. p. 2.

† Casaubon, in his notes upon Strabo, observes that the Πύργος of the Greeks, the *Burg* of the Germans, and the *Brica* of the Spaniards, all signify a *Hill*, in their original significations; so *Arx*, in Latin, signifies the top of a hill, as well as a castle.

‡ Afferius.

any one of the arts of polished life better than our ancestors. It is unquestionably certain, that the oldest forts on the Western and Northern coasts of Scotland were erected by the barbarians of the Northern Europe. Tradition has hitherto preserved the names of several Norwegian chiefs, who built the most considerable forts in the Ebudes*.

ALL the Norwegian towers in the Ebudes were of a circular form. The old square castles there are of a much later date. Those Norwegians who built these towers must have understood the art of quarrying, forming, and laying stones, in great perfection, and have used mechanical powers of which the islanders of late ages have no conception. The expence of working and carrying the stones to the very summit of a high hill, or to the edge of a dreadful precipice, through almost impassable paths, must have been very considerable, and indeed superior to what can well be imagined. One of the forts which I had occasion to view, stands on the edge of a rock which hangs over the ocean, and is of an amazing height. The other side of the rock against which you approach the fort, is a steep ascent of more than half a mile, and all the stones which composed the fort must have been carried up that hill. This fort is in the Southern extremity of the island of Barra.

MANY of these structures are still pretty entire, and almost every one of them is situated upon a hill, com-

* *Kynninburg, Kernburg, Bosewick.*

manding a very extensive prospect, or upon a small island of difficult access, or upon a precipice every way hideous. As they were destined for watch towers, as well as for places of strength, they are built and connected through irregular distances, every one of them is in sight of another, and they follow the windings of the sea coast and valleys. The Norwegians being foreigners, and consequently under continual apprehensions either from the natives, or from the Scots of the continent, took care to contrive these fortresses, so as that the alarm in case of an invasion might run immediately from one division of the country to another. On such occasions they raised great pillars of smoke, in the day time, by setting fire to a great quantity of combustible matter, and at night made signals of distress by burning whole barrels of pitch.

THE most curious fabric of the Norwegian kind that is to be seen in any part of the Highlands or islands is in Glenelg, within two miles of the firth which divides that part of the continent from the isle of Sky. This fabric is of a circular form, about thirty four feet high, and includes an area thirty feet in diameter. The wall is double: the inner one stands perpendicular, and that without falls in gently till it unites with the other near the top of what may be called the first story. The opening between the two walls is four feet broad at the bottom, and each of the walls is four feet in thickness; so that both, including the aperture between them, are twelve feet thick at the foundation. The stones are large and better chosen and

more judiciously laid than can be well conceived. There is neither lime nor any other kind of cement in the walls, and the stones are indeed placed with so much art, and so beautifully inserted into one another, that none was necessary.

BETWEEN the two walls there are laid in a position nearly horizontal, different rows of large thick flat stones which were at first near as close to one another as the deal-boards of a floor. These united stones go all the way round the edifice, and form so many different stories of unequal heights, from six to four feet; the one story rising above the other to the part where the two walls meet. A gentleman * of that country, to whose knowledge and industry I am indebted on this subject, informed me that some of the old men in the country who saw this Dun intire, were of opinion that the rows of flat stones ascended in a spiral line round the building, and supplied a communication within the walls from the foundation to the top.

WHERE the two walls join, there is a regular row of large flat stones four inches thick, which project horizontally towards the area, from the face of the inner wall. There was another row of similar stones which projected in the same manner, about eight feet above the lower tier. But the barbarity of a military man employed by the government in that country, has destroyed this curious monument of antiquity. In this whole building nothing is more

* The reverend Mr. Donald MacLeod.

curious than the rows of windows, or window-like apertures in the inner wall. They rise in a direct line above each other, from the bottom to the summit of the structure: two of them are detached from the rest, and begin at the distance of about thirteen feet from the foundation. It appears that there have been six rows of the windows first mentioned, all of the same breadth, that is a foot and a half, but unequal in the heights, some of them being but two, and others three feet high. There is no appearance of a window in the outer wall, nor of any other opening excepting the door, which communicates with a little circular stone fabric called the House of the Druids.

It must be confessed that there are some things in the construction of this and the other old towers in the islands which cannot easily be understood. It is likely that the several wide spaces which lay between the two walls were designed for storehouses, beds, and places of arms; but it is difficult to say what might have been the intention of the windows or openings in the inner side of the walls, and of the circle of flat stones which projects from the top towards the area.

We cannot learn by tradition, or otherwise, that these buildings were ever covered above. The men had small huts within the areas, and the governor had a kind of hall for his particular use. The walls had battlements of one kind or other, to which there was an ascent either by ladders or through the passages in the middle. In times of war a centinel stood constantly

stantly on the battlements in a kind of centry box ; his business was to cry aloud at certain intervals, so as to convince the enemy without, that the fort was not to be taken by surprize. The Norwegians called this centinel *Gok-man*. He was obliged, by the rules of his office, to deliver all he had to communicate in extemporary rhymes. A large horn full of spirituous liquor stood always beside him to strengthen his voice and keep up his spirits. It is little more than half a century since this Norwegian custom was last observed in an old tower belonging to a Chieftain whose estate lay in one of the remotest of the Western Islands. Torfæus says *, that the great men of Norway employed such Gok-men, not only for giving the alarm in case of danger, but likewise to inform the generous lord of the castle if they spied a vessel in distress at sea.

THE boats which were used by the ancient inhabitants of the Ebudæ, ought not to be forgot in describing their ancient curiosities. We are told by Solinus, that the Britons and Irish committed themselves to the mercy of a tempestuous sea in wicker hulls covered with cow hydes †. It is not above thirty years since one of those South British boats or curachs was used in the isle of Sky : and though the Norwegians had taught the Islanders the use of building boats with wood in a very early period, yet these curachs were the only kind which they employed on ordinary occasions, till within a century back.

* *Rer. Orcad. Histor.* p. 8.

† *Viminæis Alveis.*

SOME of the ancient curachs must have been much larger than those seen in late ages. Marianus Scotus speaks of three devout Irishmen, who, upon having formed a resolution of leading a life of pilgrimage, left their country with great secrecy, and taking with them provisions for a week, came in a boat made of skins, without sails or oars, after a navigation of seven days, into Cornwall. We are informed by Adamnan, that St. Cormack, another wrong-headed monk, who went from Iona to the Orkneys in quest of a proper hermitage, was with all his enthusiasm wise enough to keep oars in his curach; by this precaution he got safely through the ocean. These curachs must have been of a tolerable size; otherwise the romantic passengers could never have made out their voyages.

THE curach in which St. Columba came from Ireland into Iona, must have been little less than forty feet long, if the tradition hitherto preserved in that island deserves credit. And we are told by Sidonius Appollinaris *, that it was no more than matter of amusement with the Saxon pirates of his time, to cross the British sea in such leathern vessels. Boats made of the same materials, were very commonly used by other ancient nations, particularly by the Spaniards † and the Veneti near the Po ‡. It was in such transports that Cæsar wafted his men over the river Sicoris, before he attacked Pompey's lieutenants near Ilerda §.

* Carm. vii.

† Strabo.

‡ Georg. lib. iii.

§ Lucan Phar. l. iv.

BESIDES these wicker pinnaces, the ancient inhabitants of Caledonia had a kind of canoe in which they fished on rivers and fresh water lakes. This kind of canoe was hollowed out of a large tree, either with fire or tools of iron. In the Galic of Scotland, a boat of that make was called *Ammir* or trough, and *Cotti* in the language of Ireland. A few of these canoes are still to be seen in the Western Highlands: and Virgil was not perhaps far mistaken, when he imagined that the first experiments in navigation were made in such bottoms *. It cannot be asserted that the Islanders had galleys, or what they called long ships, till the Norwegians were settled among them. After that period they surely had such vessels, and in imitation of their masters, rowed about in them in quest of plunder from sea to sea through almost all the seasons of the year †.

THE histories of Scotland are full of the depredations committed by the Islanders of the middle and lower ages. The annals of Ireland complain loudly and frequently of the Hebridian *Red Shanks*. The petty Kings of Ireland were continually at war with enemies, either foreign or domestic, and had constant recourse to the assistance of the Hebridian Scots. Mercenary soldiers have been always remarkably rapacious, and by all accounts these Scots were not inferior

* *Alnos primum fluvii sensere cavatas.* Georg. 1.

† The same practice took place among the ancient inhabitants of the Grecian islands, soon after they knew how to construct galleys. Thucid. lib. i.

in cruelty and barbarity to any foreign allies. Whenever they met with a repulse in Ireland, they fled home in their ships, and plundered the South West coasts of Caledonia in their way: such was the conduct and art which they imbibed from their Norwegian conquerors.

WHEN the Hebridian chiefs and captains returned home after a successful expedition, they summoned their friends and clients to a grand entertainment. Bards and fennachies flocked in from every quarter; pipers and harpers had an undisputed right to appear on such public occasions. These entertainments were wild and chearful, nor were they unattended with the pleasures of the sentiments and unrefined taste of the times. The bards sung, and the young women danced. The old warrior related the gallant actions of his youth, and struck the young men with ambition and fire. The whole tribe filled the Chieftain's hall. The trunks of trees covered with moss were laid in the order of a table from one end of the hall to the other. Whole deer and beeves were roasted and laid before them on rough boards or hurdles of rods wove together. Their pipers played while they sat at table, and silence was observed by all. After the feast was over, they had ludicrous entertainments, of which some are still acted in the Highlands. Then the females retired, and the old and young warriors sat down in order from the Chieftain, according to their proximity in blood to him. The harp was then touched, the song was raised, and the *Sliga-Créchin*, or the drinking shell, went round.

It is a great question with the present Highlanders, what liquors were drunk at the feasts of their predecessors. They find them frequently mentioned in their old songs under various names; but it is universally allowed that they were of an intoxicating kind. We are told by Dioscorides, that the ancient Britons drank a strong liquor made of barley, which they called *Curmi*. This surely was the drink used by the Albanian Britons, and old Hebridian Scots; for in their language, to this day, every great feast is called *Curme*, as in their apprehension drink is the very life of such entertainment. Some have imagined that the *Uskebai*, the favourite liquor of the modern Highlanders, is the same with the *Curmi* of their forefathers; and there can be no strong objection to this opinion. The Gauls used their *Cervisia* *; the Germans their *Humor ex Hurdeo*; and all these liquors are evidently of the same origin, and made of perhaps the same materials. But however that may have been, it is certain that the Islanders were furnished with strong drink in a very early period; nor were they sparing of it at their public entertainments, whether of a festal or funereal kind. Whenever the guest was placed in his seat, he was obliged, by the fashion of the land, to drink off a draught of their *Water of Life*, out of a large family cup or shell. This draught was in their language called a *Drink of Uskebai*: and the guest had no sooner finished that potion than he was presented with a crooked horn, containing about an English quart, of ale. If he was able to drink all that off at a

* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xxii. cap. 35,

time, he was rather highly extolled, than condemned in the least for intemperance.

THE births of their great men were attended with no rejoicings or feasting by the old Hebridians. But their funerals were celebrated with great pomp, and followed with magnificent entertainments: all the Chieftains of the neighbouring tribes attended on such occasions, and came accompanied with a numerous retinue of their first men, and all well armed. After inviting people of such rank from their respective habitations to perhaps a distant island, it was incumbent on those principally interested in the solemnity, to display the utmost magnificence of expence.

AT the funeral procession, the men belonging to the different Chieftains were regularly drawn up, taking their places according to the dignity of their leaders. They marched forward with a slow pace, and observed great decorum. A band of pipers followed the corps, and in their turns played tunes, either made for that occasion or suitable to it. Great multitudes of female mourners kept as near the coffin as possible, and made the most lamentable howlings, tearing their hair and beating their breasts. Some of these, after the paroxysms of their zeal or affected grief, had in some measure subsided, sung the praises of the deceased in extemporary rhimes. The male relations and dependents thought it un-

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manly

manly to shed tears, or at least indecent to betray their want of fortitude in public *.

IF there were any characteristical diversities in genius, manners, and customs, of the Islanders, when compared to their neighbours on the continent, they must have borrowed them from the Norwegians, who had been long their superiors, and who of consequence must have introduced their own taste, fashions, and laws, among them. Hence we may account for that disposition and attachment which the inhabitants of the Ebudes discovered to piracy and poetry, in a superior degree to any other tribe of the Albanian Scots.

* *Fæminis lugere honestum est, viris meminisse.* Tacitus de moribus Germ.

DISSERTATION XVIII.

Of the Scottish and Pictish Dominions, before they were united under one Sovereign.

HAVING shewn, in the course of the preceding dissertations, that the Picts and Scots were the genuine posterity of the Caledonians, though divided into separate kingdoms, it is necessary I should throw some light on the extent of their respective dominions.—That want of records which has involved their ancient history in obscurity, has also left us in the dark with regard to the real boundaries of their territories.

ACCORDING to two antient fragments of Scots history, published in the Appendix to Innes's Critical Essay, Fergus, the son of Erc, reigned over Albany, from *Drumalbin* to the sea of Ireland and Inchevall *. The sea of Ireland is a boundary well understood. The Western islands of Scotland, formerly the Ebudes of the Romans, are called *Inche Galle* to this day. In the eighth century those islands fell into the hands

* De situ Albanicæ, quæ in se figuram hominis habet.

of the Norwegians, who, like all other foreigners, were called *Gauls* by the Highlanders of the Continent. *Inche* is an abbreviation of *Innis*, which in the Galic signifies an Island; so that *Inchegalle*, literally translated, is the *Isles of strangers*. How far *Drumalbin*, the other boundary mentioned in the fragment, extends, is not yet determined by antiquarians.

THE word *Drumalbin*, literally translated, signifies the *Ridge of Albany*. Agreeable to this interpretation, it is called by Adamnan, the writer of Columba's life, *Dorsum Britaniæ*, or a Chain of hills, according to the genius of the Latin tongue. These hills have been confined to a principal branch of the Grampian mountains, which extends from the Eastern to the Western sea. But the true meaning of the name implies that this *Ridge of hills* must have run from South to North, rather than from East to West.

THE anonymous author of another small piece concerning the antient history of Scotland, was, according to his own testimony, informed by Andrew, bishop of Caithness, who flourished in the twelfth century, that Albany was of old divided into seven kingdoms. All these petty kingdoms are described, and their boundaries settled pretty exactly. The two last of those dynasties mentioned in that fragment are the kingdom of Murray, including Ross, and the kingdom of *Arragatheil* *. According to

* Sextum regnum fuit Murray et Ross. Septimum regnum fuit Arregaithel.

Cambden and Usher, the territories of the more ancient Scots were confined within Cantyre, Knapdale, Argyle, Braidalbain, and some of the Western Islands. Cambden believed too precipitately, that Iona was made over to Columba by Brudius, King of the Picts.

ADAMNAN, who wrote the history of the life of Columba, and was himself abbot of Iona, relates, that the saint was courteously received by Conal, King of the Scots. As Adamnan has been very minute in his history, it is far from being probable that he would forget Brudius, had he given such a benefaction to Columba.

THE author of the Critical Essay is more liberal to the Scots than Cambden and Usher, and extends their antient territories to a branch of the Grampian mountain which runs all the way from Athol to the sea coast of Knodort*. But as he had very justly exposed the mistake of Bede with regard to Iona, and as it does not appear from any other author, that either Brudius or any other Pictish King possessed a foot of ground from the Glotta to the Tarvisium of the antients; he might have given all the North-west coast, from Clyde to Dunsbyhead, as also the Cathanefia of his anonymous author, to the kingdom of *Arreghael*.

* Near the Isle of Sky in Inverness-shire.

THE Galic name *Arreghael*, or rather *Jar-ghaël* †, was, in the Latin of later ages, changed into Ergadia: and it appears from a charter granted by the Earl of Ross, and confirmed by Robert the Second of Scotland, that *Garloch*, a district which lies at a considerable distance from Knodort, to the North, was a part of Ergadia *. It is likewise apparent, from the charters given by King Robert Bruce, to Thomas Randolph, Earl of Murray, that all the Western Continent, from Lochaber to *East Ross*, was comprehended within the Ergadia of the antients.

WE learn from Bede ‡, that in the year 603, Ædan, King of the British Scots, came against Ordulfred, King of the Northumbrians, at the head of a very numerous and gallant army §. In the genealogical series of the Scottish Kings given by Innes, from his authentic Chronicles, Ædan, or Aidan, is the great grandson of Fergus MacEirc. It is difficult to understand how this King of Scots could have mustered up such a vast army against the Saul of the English nation ||, if his territories were pent up within the small principality of Camden's *Arreghael*, or even the Ergadia of Innes. So far were the Picts from lending

† See a note on the word Jar-ghael. page 16.

* Confirmatio donationis Comitiss Rossie Paullo Mactyre de terra de Gerloch, anno secundo Roberti II.

‡ Hist. Eccles. cap. 34.

§ Cum immenso et forti exercitu.

|| Adamn. Vita Columbæ, lib. 2.

any assistance to the Scots, that they were engaged in a close confederacy with the Saxons of that time.

THE Britons, it is true, were allies to Aidan, but they deserted him in the very crisis of this war. He certainly could not have any auxiliaries from Ireland, as Bede positively says that the Irish never committed any acts of hostility against the English; on the contrary, that they always cultivated an inviolable friendship with them. We therefore have reason to believe that Aidan's numerous army must have entirely consisted of his own subjects; and consequently that his dominions comprehended at least all the Western coast of Scotland, together with the bishop's *Carthanesia*.

BRUDIUS, the Pictish King, who was converted to the Christian faith by Columba, had a kind of royal seat at Inverness. This appears from the accounts given by Adamnan, in the life of that saint. From the situation of this royal residence we may conclude, that Murray, and very probably Ross, which was of old annexed to that division of Albany, made a part of the Pictish kingdom.

COLUMBA, in his journey to the palace of King Brudius, travelled over Drumalbin, or Adamnan's Dorsum Britannæ. It is impossible to tell whether the saint went directly from Iona, or from a more Northerly part of those Western districts which were
under

under his jurisdiction. But as there is a ridge of high hills all the way from Glengary, where Loch Ness terminates *, to the Frith of Taine, it is far from being improbable that Drumalbin extended that far, and that the kingdoms of the Scots and Picts were separated by the frith and hills just mentioned.

ALL our historians have agreed that the inhabitants of Murray were a seditious and disloyal race of men, for several ages after the Scots had reduced Pictavia. They rebelled frequently against the posterity of Malcolm Canemore. One of those Princes found himself under the necessity of transplanting that turbulent people into different parts of his kingdom. But it may be inferred, from the impatience with which they lived under the yoke of a new government, that they were of the Pictish nation, and consequently that the dominions of that people extended much farther towards the North than some of the Scottish historians are willing to allow.

THE Picts and Saxons were alternately masters of *Laudonia*, or those more Easterly countries which lie between the frith of Edinburgh and the river Tweed. We learn from Bede, that Oswin, brother to St. Oswald, and the seventh King of the Northumbrians, subdued the Pictish nation in a great measure, and made them tributary †. This Prince began his reign in the year 642. His son Egfrid having formed a

* Brudius had his seat at the end of this lake.

† Bed. Hist. Eccles. lib. 2. cap. 5.

resolution to carry his conquests beyond the Forth, invaded the Pictish territories, and was cut off, with the greatest part of his army, in the year 685. A victory so decisive produced great consequences. The Picts of that age recovered what their predecessors had lost. The Eastern counties, or *Laudonia*, fell immediately into their hands.

It appears from Bede, that the Saxons continued masters of Galloway, when he finished his Ecclesiastical History. He gives an account of *Candida Casa*, or Whitehorn; where a bishop of the Saxon nation was installed in his time. After Bede's death, the Picts recovered Galloway likewise, or made a conquest of it; so that before the extinction of their monarchy, all the territories, bounded on the one side by the Forth and Clyde, and on the other by the Tweed and Solway, fell into their hands.

UPON the whole, it seems evident, that the antient Scots, some time before the conquest of Pictavia, possessed all that side of Caledonia which lies along the North and Western ocean, from the frith of Clyde to the Orkneys. Towards the East, their dominions were divided, in all appearance, from the Pictish dominions, by those high mountains which run all the way from Lochlomond, near Dumbarton, to the frith of Taine, which separates the county of Sutherland from a part of Ross; and those high hills which pass through the middle of Ross, are very probably a part of the antient Drumalbin.

DISSERTATION XIX.

Of the Religion of the antient Caledonians.

SOME ingenious writers have been of opinion that Druidism was never established in Caledonia. It is difficult to say, why assertions so ill-founded were obtruded upon the world, if it was not to deduce the honor of the present prevalent system of free-thinking from our remotest ancestors. Irreligion is never one of the virtues of savage life: we must descend to polished times for that scepticism which arises from the pride and vanity natural to the cultivated state of the human mind. It is not now my business to enter into a controversy with those who affirm that religion is no more than an engine of policy, and that the gods of all nations sprung from the timidity of the multitude in the first stages of society.

HAD the inhabitants of Britain rose originally like vegetables out of the earth, according to the opinion of Cæsar and Tacitus, there might have been some foundation for supposing that the Druidical system of religion was never known in Caledonia. But as it is generally allowed that the inhabitants of both the divisions of Britain deduced their origin from nations on the Continent, it is reasonable to

think that they carried along with them the gods of their ancestors, in their transmigration to this island.

THAT the Caledonians, in the time of Julius Agricola, were not totally destitute of religion; appears from a passage in the speech which Tacitus puts into the mouth of Galgacus; in which that chieftain mentions both gods and a providence. The celebrated writer also observes, that after the Caledonians were worsted in the first action with the Romans, far from being intimidated, or cured of their own self-sufficiency, they formed a resolution to renew the war with greater vigour. For this purpose, says Tacitus, they armed their young men, placed their wives and children in places of safety, summoned their several communities together, held public assemblies, entered into confederacies, and confirmed their engagements with sacrifices and the blood of victims*.

DRUIDISM was certainly the original religion of all the branches of the Celtic nation: yet Cæsar observes, that the Germans, who undoubtedly were principally descended from the great Celtic stock, had no Druids among them. We have reason to differ in opinion from that great man. Cæsar was too much ingrossed with his own vast projects, to enter minutely into the theological institutions of the Germans. Tacitus, who made the customs and manners of Germany his particular study, informs us that priests possessed great influence in that country.

* Cætibus et sacrificiis conspirationem civitatum sancire.

DRUID, or rather *Druthin*, is originally a Teutonic word. Its meaning is, the servant of God, or the servant of *Truth*: *Dru* or *Tru* signify *God* or *Truth* indiscriminately. It is certain that every German priest was called *Dry*, and the Saxons of England brought that word from Germany into Britain.—The English Saxons, before their conversion to Christianity, worshipped, it is apparent, the ancient Gods of Gaul, and nearly under the same names. The *Tuisco*, or *Tuisto* of Germany, to whom the Saxons dedicated *Tuesday*, was the same with the *Teutates* of Gaul; and the Thor of the Saxons was the *Taranis* of the ancient Gauls.

THE meaning of *Teutates* is GOD THE FATHER OF ALL BEINGS: *Dyu*, in the ancient British, which was undoubtedly the same with the language of Gaul, signifies *God*; and *Tad*, or *Tat*, in the Armorican dialect, is, to this day, the word for Father. The *Thor* of the Celto-Scythians of Germany was, as I observed before, the *Taranis* of their neighbours to the South. In the ancient language of the Scots, both the names of this divinity are retained to this day, with a small variation of the final syllables. *Tarran*, among the Highlanders, is the lower muttering of thunder, and *Tarninach** signifies the loudest peals of that awful noise.

* *Tarninach* is probably a corruption of *Nd'air-neamhnach*, or *Tar-nearnach*, as it is pronounced, literally signifying *Heavenly Father*; thunder being thought the voice of the supreme Divinity. Or perhaps it may be derived from *Torneonach*, literally an *uncommon and wonderful noise*; or from *Nd'air-neonach*, the *Wrathful Father*.

THIS identity of religion which prevailed among the ancient Germans and Gauls, is a proof that tribes of the latter were the prevalent colonies of Germany. The Tectosages, a people of Gallia Norbonensis, possessed themselves, according to Cæsar, of the most fertile regions of Germany. The Boii and Helvetii, nations sprung from the Gaulish stock, made very considerable acquisitions near the Hercynian forest. The Suevi were the most powerful nation in Germany. Of the several tribes into which the Suevi were divided, the Senones pretended to be the most noble and the most ancient. Their pretensions to antiquity Tacitus supports with an argument arising from the genius of their religion.

“ At a stated time,” saith the excellent historian, “ all those who have derived their blood from the Senones meet, in the persons of their representatives or ambassadors. This assembly is held in a wood, consecrated by the auguries of their predecessors, and the superstitious fears of former ages. In this wood, after having publicly sacrificed some unhappy man, they commemorate the horrible beginnings of their barbarous idolatry.” In this passage every one may see the strongest features of Druidism, painted in the most lively colours, and placed in the clearest point of light. It is unnecessary to observe, that the Senones, who sent colonies into Italy and Germany, were originally a people of Gaul, and settled near the Seine.

DURING the reign of Tarquinius Priscus, that is, five hundred years before Cæsar was born, Ambigatus, King of the Celtic Gaul, finding that his territories were greatly overstocked with inhabitants, sent his two nephews, Bellovesus and Sigovefus, at the head of two powerful armies, in quest of settlements in foreign countries. The province allotted by the Augurs to Bellovesus was Italy, and that to Segovefus was the Hercynian forest.—Livy has preserved this piece of history ; and according to Cæsar himself, the great university and metropolitical seat of Druidism lay in the country of the Carnates ; the same Carnates whom Livy places among the subjects of Ambigatus.

WE have no reason to believe, notwithstanding Cæsar's authority to the contrary, that there was any essential difference between the religion of Gaul and that of Germany. The victorious Boii, the Helvetii, the Tectosages and Senones, the Celtic nations of Sigovefus, and more especially his Carnates, could not have either forgot or despised their own religion, upon settling themselves in a foreign country. They certainly would not have dismissed the Gods under whose auspices they had been so successful. The conquerors must rather be naturally supposed to have established their own spiritual institutions upon the ruins of those which had done so little service to the conquered.

It is universally agreed that Druidism was established in South Britain. The superintendant of the whole

whole order, it has been said, resided there: and we learn from Cæsar, that those who studied to understand the deepest mysteries of that superstition, travelled into Britain. Whether the most learned professors of Druidism taught in Anglesey, or elsewhere, it is impossible to determine. From the excision of the groves of Mona, by Suetonius Paullinus, nothing can be concluded in favour of that little island. To make the Western Ebudæ the seat of these colleges, is as perfect a chimera as that Druidism was not at all known in Caledonia.

THE ecclesiastical polity of North Britain was certainly the same with that which took place among all the Celtic nations. We have the clearest vestiges of the Druidical superstition in many parts of Scotland to this day. The appellation of its priests, *Dru* and *Druthinich*, is still preserved. Their holy places are pointed out, and are called the Houses of the Druids by the vulgar. In the Isles, and throughout the Continent of Scotland, are many of those circular fabrics of large rude stones, within which they performed the mysterious rites of their religion.

THOSE circular piles of stone are by some called the Houses of the Picts. This mistake arose very probably from the similarity of sound between the two Galic words which express the Picts and Druids. The Picts are sometimes called *Cruithnich*, in the language of the Highlands, and Druids always *Druithnich* or *Drui*.—The injudicious vulgar think that Fingal and
his

his heroes, who are thought to have been giants, placed enormous kettles upon those circles of stone, in order to boil their venison. Both these circumstances stand as proofs of the uncertainty of oral tradition in every country.

THE Romans, though seldom governed by the spirit of persecution, were very zealous in destroying the Druidism of South Britain. Claudius Cæsar endeavoured to abolish it. The groves consecrated to that cruel superstition in Mona were cut down by Suetonius Paulinus in the reign of Nero. It is reasonable to believe that other governors and emperors, directed by the same principle of humanity, declared war against the abominable rites of a sect who offered human victims to their idols. After Christianity became the established religion of South Britain, in the reign of Constantine, the empire of Taranis and Teutates must have been totally ruined, or confined within very narrow limits.—But the Pagan Saxons, who, in appearance, had good reason to boast of the strength of their Gods, undoubtedly re-established the worship of those divinities.

I HAVE already observed, that those victorious infidels brought the word *Dry* from Germany. Together with the name they certainly introduced the office, being superstitiously devoted to *Tuisto*, *Woden*, and *Thor*. The history of King Edwin's conversion, in Bede, and the great revolution brought about in the kingdom of Northumberland at that time, in spiritual matters, is a sufficient demonstration of this position.

One circumstance is sufficient for my purpose to mention concerning the conversion of Edwin. After Paulinus had exhorted Edwin to embrace the Christian faith, agreeably to the instructions he had formerly received from a person sent from the invisible world, the King summoned his friends and great council to have their advice and approbation. One of the counsellors or Princes was the Pagan High-priest, or Primus Pontificum. The name, or rather title of this High-priest or Pontifex Maximus was Coifi, or Coefi.—I know not whether any one has attempted to explain the meaning of this word. It was, in my opinion, the common title of every Druidical superintendant of spiritual affairs. The Highland tale-makers talk frequently concerning *Caiffie*, or *Coiffie Dry*;—and by these two words they mean a person of extraordinary sense, skill and cunning. *Dry* undoubtedly signifies a *Druid*, a wise man, a prophet, a philosopher, and sometimes a magician, in the Galic:—*Coiffie Dry*, Bede's Coiffi or Primus Pontificum, stands for the principal Druid, or what such a person ought to be, a man supremely wise and learned.

It is needless to enlarge any farther on the Druidism of Caledonia. That point has been handled at great length in another Essay *. Germany and Gaul, South Britain and Ireland, were full of that idolatrous superstition: and how could the inhabitants of Caledonia be ignorant of the religion of their ancestors and brethren descended from the same great Celtic source?

* The author alludes to the Dissertation on the Druids, lost among Sir James MacDonald's papers.

It is, in short, very unreasonable to think that a nation, in any of its stages, should be totally destitute of religion: it is both unnatural and contrary to experience to suppose it. Religion, whether it arises from the original pressure of the divinity on the human mind, or springs from a timidity inherent in man, is certainly more prevalent than atheism: and indeed it is doubtful with me whether atheism ever existed in a mind that is not perfectly insane. It is a boast of the sceptic, which cannot be believed: and it is equally incredible that the savage, however much his mind is obscured, could entertain such an irrational idea.

THAT the Caledonians had some ideas of religion and a providence, is certain: that they were more pure in their spiritual institutions than other Celtic nations, their barbarism in other respects sufficiently contradicts.—With the Teutates and Taranis of their Gaulish ancestors, they probably worshipped some local divinities of their own creation. That universal God of the heathen world, the sun, was certainly worshipped with great devotion in Caledonia. The instance I have given, towards the beginning of the preceding dissertation, is demonstrable of the honour paid to that great luminary, under the name of Grannius. The fires lighted on eminences by the common Highlanders, on the first day of May, till of late years, is one of the remains of that superstition.

DISSERTATION XX.

Of the Time in which Christianity was introduced into North Britain. That the first Churches of Britain were planted by Oriental Missionaries.

AFTER spending so much time in the investigation of the secular antiquities of the Scots nation, it may be naturally expected that I have made some inquiry into their ancient ecclesiastical history. My observations on that subject are comprehended in this and the subsequent dissertation.

THE Christian religion became known in the principal divisions of Britain before the middle of the third century; yet it is impossible to determine the particular time in which the first dawn of the gospel rose on Caledonia. Tertullian, a writer cotemporary with the Emperor Severus, and confessedly a very learned man, affirms positively, that the Christian religion had, in his own time, penetrated further into Britain than the Roman arms had done. Let us examine, therefore, the testimony of Tertullian, and investigate what parts of Britain he had in his eye.

IT

It is certain, from the several different passages which Tertullian has quoted from Tacitus, that he had read the writings of that great historian; and from them he certainly must have understood that South Britain had been entirely reduced into the form of a Roman province, before the end of the first century.

To say nothing of the successful campaign Claudius Cæsar had made there in person, the Prætor Aulus Plantius had vanquished some British Kings, taken many garrisons, and conquered several whole nations. Ostorius Scapula, who succeeded Plantius, fought and defeated the Iceni, Cangi, Silures, and Brigantes. Suetonius Paulinus, Petilius Cerealis, and Julius Frontinus, three great generals, carried their victorious arms much farther than Ostorius had done; and the famous Agricola had finished the conquest of the country now called England, before he invaded Caledonia, near twenty years before the end of the first century.

It is past all doubt that Agricola performed great things in North Britain. He ravaged or subdued those districts of that country which front Ireland. He defeated the Caledonian army on the Eastern coast. His fleet reduced the Orkney isles. His land and sea forces had spread either desolation or terror over all the maritime places of Caledonia, but still there were many corners of the country, and even whole districts, which the difficulties arising from their situation, and his want

want of time, hindered that illustrious general from pervading. These districts may be reasonably thought to have been the places meant by Tertullian *.

IF any one, to invalidate the force of this testimony, should object, that Tertullian was hasty and dogmatical, frequently led astray by an intemperate zeal, and too apt, like many of his profession, to obtrude pious frauds on the world, his objection would have been too vague and unjust to deserve a confutation that would unavoidably lead us into a long discussion of particulars.

BUT were it certain that this ancient writer's character is enough to destroy the credibility of every fact that rests upon his bare testimony, still we have cause to believe that some of the remote parts of North Britain were converted to the Christian faith, in the reign of Severus. It is impossible to prove from history, that no such conversion happened in that period; and if it be true that the gospel had made its way into the Southern division of this island long before that time, it is probable that the same change took place in some parts of Caledonia, before the middle of the third century.

CHRISTIANITY had made a progress amazingly rapid over all the provinces of the Roman empire before the end of the first age, nor were the doctrines taught

* Et Britannorum inaccesſa Romanis loca, Chriſto vero ſubdita. Tertul. lib. contra Judæos cap. 7.

by that new religion confined within the pale of the empire. It was one of the first principles of the primitive Christians to communicate their doctrine to all nations. Animated by the warmest zeal, they were active in propagating their tenets; and their success was proportionable to their pious industry on that head. We are told by Tacitus that there was a vast multitude of Christians at Rome*, when Nero, or some fatal accident, laid that imperial city in ashes. Pliny the younger, informs the Emperor Trajan†, that great numbers of all ages, of all degrees, and of both sexes, had embraced the religion of those men: nor was this superstitious contagion, to speak with that author, confined to the cities only, it had spread itself likewise through the villages and country. He adds farther, that the temples of the province committed to his care, had been almost deserted, that the sacred rites of the established worship had been a long time neglected, and that the victims had very few purchasers till he had applied the cure of some wholesome severities for remedying so great an evil."

TRAJAN invested Pliny with a consular power over Bithynia, Pontus, and the republic of Byzantium, about the beginning of the second century; and the reign of Severus comes down farther than the commencement of the third. After what has been extracted from one of his epistles, it is needless to ask, whether Pliny was prepossessed in favour of Chris-

* Igitur primo correpti qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens, &c. Tacit. Annal. lib. 15.

† Epist. xcvi. lib. 10.

tianity, or in the humour of framing holy fictions to support its credit? So far indeed was he from having taken such a bias, that, though otherwise a reasonable and good natured man, he gives the hardest of all names to the professors of Christianity. He calls the Christian religion a sort of madness, and a silly and extravagant superstition. It is idle to search into the political motives which led Pliny to speak with such severity against Christianity. His words shew plainly that the Christians were greatly multiplied in some provinces of the Roman empire, about a whole century before the latter end of Severus's reign. Here then is a fact which rests upon the testimony of unexceptionable evidence, and what can hinder us from believing, upon the faith of the primitive divine, that the gospel began to flourish in Britain about the beginning of the third century?

ALL the Scottish historians are agreed that Christianity was established in their country about the beginning of the third century, in the reign of King Donald. The objections raised by some eminent antiquaries against the truth of this doctrine, are of little importance. The story of King Donald is at least as well founded as those of King Lucius, and King Arviragus, which some antiquaries endeavoured to support at a vast but useless expence of learning*.

THE Scots of former ages have, like their neighbours, carried their pretensions to spiritual antiquity extra-

* It is more than probable that what is told concerning the three Monarchs is an absolute fiction.

vagantly high. Any one who peruses the famous letter of the Scottish nobility and barons to John, bishop of Rome, in the reign of Robert Bruce, will see a clear demonstration of this vanity. In that letter, after the greatest men of the Scots nation had confidently asserted that "the King of Kings had favoured their ancestors, though planted in the uttermost parts of the earth, with perhaps the earliest call to his holy faith," they assure his Holiness, that Christ had given another extraordinary testimony of his particular regard to their people. The words, rendered into English, are, "Neither would our Lord have the Scots of old confirmed in the said faith by any other person than the apostle first called by himself, the most worthy brother-german of the blessed St. Peter, that is St. Andrew, who was set apart to be their everlasting patron. Such was the will of Christ *."

As the Scots were in a perilous situation when this letter was written to the Pope, it was undoubtedly convenient for them to draw some political advantages from the fraternal relation of St. Peter and St. Andrew, and consequently from their spiritual consanguinity with Rome. They took care, therefore, to remind the sovereign pontiff "that those most holy fathers who were his predecessors, had with many favours and privileges strengthened their kingdom and people, as these had been the peculiar care and portion of St. Peter's brother." Nor did they forget to draw from such strong premises a very important

* See Dr. Mackenzie in the Life of John Barbour.

conclusion. They most earnestly entreated the Pope to remember those strong bonds of friendship. They conjured him to interpose his good offices, so as to mediate a peace between them and the English; and they gave him to understand at the same time, with great spirit and freedom, "that if he should persist in his partiality, and continue to give faith to the misrepresentation of their foes, the Most High would lay to his charge all the effusion of Christian blood, and all the loss of immortal souls that should ensue upon the disputes between them and their unreasonable adversaries."

WE may take it for granted, that the Scottish nobility and lesser barons had the story of their relation to St. Andrew, and consequently to his most worthy brother-german, from the learned ecclesiastics of those and former times. But churches, like nations, have frequently valued themselves upon an imaginary connexion with some illustrious founder. That of Rome, every one knows, began early enough to claim a peculiar right to the Prince of the apostolic college. Antioch had pretensions of the same kind, and perhaps a better title to the prerogative founded on it. Alexandria, though the seat of a great patriarch, was modest enough to content herself with an inferior dignity. She had only the honour of having St. Mark for her spiritual patron, a person who had no higher commission than that of an evangelist. The first bishop of Jerusalem could not with any decency be any thing less than the brother of Christ.

SOME

SOME time ago, it would have been deemed a heretical and a most dangerous doctrine in Spain to deny that the churches there were founded by James the Greater. Two centuries back, it was an article of every Frenchman's creed, that St. Dennis, to say nothing of Lazarus and Mary Magdalene, preached with great success in his country. Dennis was a member of the Areopagus of Athens; and Joseph of Arimathea was one of the great Jewish Sanhedrim. Rather than yield the post of honour to a rival nation, England thought proper in former days to ascribe the merit of her conversion to the honourable counsellor just mentioned, the same excellent person who had buried our Saviour in his own tomb *.

THE churches of the two first ages, constantly distracted by the fears of persecution, or always employed in affairs of much greater importance, never thought of drawing out ecclesiastical annals or registers, containing the history or order of their pastors. Eusebius acknowledges that it was extremely difficult,

* Though the editor has all due respect for the judgment of the English, in points of national honour, he is far from thinking a member of the Sanhedrim equal in dignity to one of the Athenian Areopagus. The Jews, though a chosen people, were by no means to be compared to the illustrious inhabitants of Attica; it were therefore to be wished our ancestors had taken a man of some higher rank than Joseph for their spiritual patron; so our rivals, the French, would have been deprived of that pre-eminence which Dennis has given them, in this very material controversy.

for this reason, to investigate the names of those who governed the churches founded by the apostles *.

THE ablest ecclesiastical critics have exhausted the whole strength of their erudition and fancy in settling the order in which Peter was succeeded. Clemens is one time the first, at another the second, but generally the third in the papal list. Cletus and Anacletus are in the chronological systems of some learned annalists, one time identified, and at another divided into two pontiffs. Linus is by many called the second Pope of Rome, and by not a few the fourth. Nothing, in short, can be more full of uncertainty or more favourable to historical scepticism, than what ancient and modern writers have said on this subject †.

HEGESSIPPUS was the first who, about the year one hundred and sixty of the vulgar æra, began to draw up catalogues of the bishops of Rome, Corinth, and other principal sees ‡. He was another Papias, equally wrongheaded, credulous, and visionary.

It is undoubtedly a task that exceeds the power of any one who extends his researches to Christian antiquities, to give authentic lists of the old bishops of Rome, Jerusalem, and Antioch, to ascertain the time at which the once famous churches of Carthage, and other African dioceses, were founded, and to discover

* Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 4.

† See Basnage, Hist. de L'Eglise, liv. vii. cap. 4.

‡ Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. cap. 27.

their holy patrons. If this is the case, why should we make any difficulty of acknowledging that the origin of our British churches, and the succession of our oldest pastors, are totally lost in oblivion, or greatly embarrassed with inextricable absurdities.

IN spite of that fond partiality which men will naturally entertain for those who seem to have done honour to their country, it is hardly in our power to believe, upon the authority of some ancient writers, that the British isles were visited by the apostles, by either one or more of that sacred body. To prove this supposed fact, Usher and Stillingfleet have quoted the plainest testimonies from Eusebius, Theodoret, Jerome, and Chrysostom. It will be readily objected, that these authors, though very learned, were bad authorities. They lived at too great a distance from the time at which the event could have happened. To obviate this difficulty, Stillingfleet urges the testimony of Clemens Romanus, a father of the highest antiquity, one who was cotemporary with the apostles themselves, and one whose name was written *in the Book of Life* *. In one of his letters to the Corinthians, Clemens says expressly, that St. Paul preached righteousness throughout the whole earth, and in so doing went to the very extremity of the West. But these words are too hyperbolical to be literally true, and too undeterminate to be decisive in the present question. We know that Catullus, in his lampoon on

* Stilling. Orig. Brit. p. 38.

Mamurra and Cæsar, calls Britain the remotest island of the West. Horace too calls the inhabitants of our island the most distant men on the face of the earth*. But Virgil gave the same epithet to the Morini of Gaul, though he knew that the Britons were beyond them, and, to speak in his own language, divided entirely from the whole world. And Horace, in another passage, calls Spain the last of the Western countries†. A noted cape there goes still under the name of Finisterre, or the extremity of the earth.

ALL this considered, it is probable that Clemens meant no more than some distant land, by the extremity of the West. It is certain that Paul intended to make a journey into Spain: so we are told by himself, in his letter to the Romans. Theodoret affirms that he went thither after his liberation at Rome. The expression in the epistle of Clemens may be applied with the strictest propriety to that country. If we extend its meaning as far as the power of words can go, we have a kind of demonstration that the apostle preached in Ireland, and preached also in Thule. So a Christian poet, Venantius Fortunatus, has affirmed, without any scruple, though with no more justice than Virgil had on his side, when he promised the conquest of the ultima Thule to Augustus Cæsar. Poets and orators have a right to speak at large. The Christian panegyrists, who have celebrated the praises of

* Carm. Lib. 1. Ode 35.

Serves iturum Cæsarem in ultimos orbis Britannos.

† Carm. Lib. 1. Ode 36. Hesperia sospes ab ultima.

apostles and saints, have assumed the same liberty; nor do they deserve any severe censure for speaking agreeable to the rules of their art: the whole blame ought to fall on those reasoners who draw serious conclusions from principles which are no more than the high flights and hyperbolical bombast of rhetoric.

BUT were it certain, that the testimonies of holy fathers, ancient Christian orators, and ecclesiastical historians, are arguments solid enough to convince the most unprejudiced that the apostles visited the British isles, it is no easy matter to comprehend why their ministerial labours should be confined to the countries now called England and Ireland. Archbishop Usher had a strong inclination to convince the learned world that Ireland had her share of that mighty advantage*. He has quoted, in the chapter of his Antiquities which relates immediately to his own country, a very clear testimony of Eusebius, from which it appears, as far as the authority of that writer can go, that the apostles preached in the British Isles: and who could deny that Ireland was of old reckoned one of that number?

STILLINGFLEET had no great partiality for the *kingdom of saints*, and none at all for Scotland. He therefore exerted his whole strength in proving, that the Southern and better part of Britain was the happy land where one of the apostles had exercised his function. To establish that favourite point, he

* Brit. Eccles. Ant. cap. xvi. p. 386.

availed himself of the testimonies which the learned primate had collected to his hand ; taking particular care at the same time not to drop a kind hint that North Britain and Ireland enjoyed the same advantage.

THE most ancient churches of Britain were founded, in all probability, by Asiatic missionaries. The conformity of their belief and practice in the affair of Easter, to that which prevailed among the Christians of the East, strengthens this opinion.

IT is well known that the celebration of Easter was one of the earliest customs which prevailed among the primitive Christians. The precise time at which that festival ought to be kept, was almost universally reckoned an affair of the last importance ; and the question, what that time was, however frivolous in itself, produced high disputes, schismatical divisions, and the most disagreeable effects.

THE churches of the Lesser Asia solemnized their Easter, agreeably to the Mosaic institution with regard to the Jewish passover, on the fourteenth day of the moon, in the first month. The churches of the West, and of many other countries, took care to celebrate that feast on the Lord's day thereafter. This diversity of opinion created an infinite deal of animosity among the Christians of those times. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, came to Rome, all the way from Asia, to confer with the then possessor of St. Peter's chair,
about

about establishing the peace of the church. Polycarp himself was one of these who were branded with the frightful names of *Tessares kai decatite* and *Quarto decimans*. The two pacific bishops communicated with each other : but Polycarp, after returning home, was so far from giving up the point, in complaisance to the Pope, that he confirmed the churches of Asia in the belief of their old tradition. The quarrel was renewed under the pontificate of Victor, and became very violent, through the foolish management of that haughty prelate.

WE have no great concern in the sequel of this dispute. The controversy, though it arose from a trifle, was kept alive for a long time. In spite of papal decisions, and many synodical decrees, the Asiatic churches maintained their old tradition and custom, till the first general council of Nice, or rather the authority of Constantine the Great, silenced them. But the canons made by that and other councils, though supported by imperial edicts, had no manner of weight in Britain. The churches there followed the ritual of the Eastern Christians, some of them till after the beginning of the eighth century, and some longer. It was in the year 710, that the Pictish Christians renounced their error with regard to the canonical time of solemnizing the paschal festival. So Bede has told us ; and it cost him and the abbot Ceolfrid the trouble of a very long and elaborately learned epistle, addressed to King Naitan,

to reform them and their sovereign out of that capital error *.

Nothing is more improbable than that the light of the gospel shined long in the Southern division of this island, before the first faint rays of it had penetrated into the Northern. The vicinity of the former to the Continent, and its constant intercourse with the world, would have soon made it acquainted with the new religion. In Nero's time there was a vast number of Christians at Rome; and it is well known that after the burning of that great city, they were most barbarously persecuted; as the perpetrators of the horrible crime, which many laid to the Emperor's own charge. We may take it for granted, that the news of that extraordinary event, and of the unparalleled severities consequent upon it, would take no long time in travelling to South Britain. The Romans had colonies and subjects there. Human nature will always sympathize with the distressed. Every good heart will feel deeply for the innocent, when doomed, like the unhappy victims at Rome †, to the horrors and torments of the most ignominious and painful deaths. On these accounts, the history of the dreadful persecution which Nero raised against the Christians must have come soon into Britain, and brought

* Bed. Eccles. Hist. lib. v. cap. 21.

† Tacit. Annal. lib. xiv. Et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis, contextis laniatu canum interirent, aut crucibus affixi, aut flammandi, atque ubi defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis urentur.

along with it some accounts of the religion that had afforded a pretext for committing such barbarities. As that religion promised to make its votaries wiser and happier men than those unacquainted with it, that consideration likewise would have soon waked the curiosity of many. Some of the Christians who survived that cruel massacre at Rome, and many of those elsewhere who had cause to dread the repetition of the same excesses, would have undoubtedly taken refuge in places of greatest security, and of consequence have fled into Britain. The blood of martyrs has been in one sense justly called the seed of the church; and the first general persecution is very probably the æra from which we ought to date the first establishment of the Christian faith in the country now called England.

It is far from being evident that the new religion made any considerable progress in Britain before the reign of Domitian. In that reign Agricola introduced the liberal arts and sciences among the Britons of the South. This circumstance, however prejudicial it may have been to the liberties of that people, was a very favourable one to Christianity.

In all the countries where the sciences are cultivated, a spirit of inquiry will naturally prevail. The belief of former ages will no longer be the rule of faith, in matters of any importance. Established systems, whether of philosophy or religion, will be canvassed with an ingenious freedom. Men, who are

made for speculation and the service of virtue, will indulge themselves in the most rational and exalted of all pleasures, that of discovering those truths which are of the utmost consequence to mankind. They will most chearfully communicate their discoveries to the world, unless cruelly restrained by penal laws, or courts of inquisition ; and even the fury and vengeance of these will hardly be able totally to silence them. In the height of persecution they will mutter out their sense of things in a corner, or open their sentiments freely among their friends. The history of ages and nations, especially in matters of religion, justifies these observations. It is therefore evident, that the introduction of the sciences and fine arts would contribute much to the advancement of Christianity in South Britain.

AMONG the liberal sciences which Agricola introduced into South Britain, the art of speaking elegantly held one of the first places. The humour of cultivating that branch of learning prevailed to such a degree, that the inhabitants of Thule began to talk of hiring rhetoricians, if we can believe a cotemporary writer *. All indeed that we can infer from the Satires is, that a taste for eloquence was greatly diffused over Britain : and where the art of speaking was so much studied, it is more than probable that the art of thinking was not neglected. In short,

* Gallia caufidicos docuit facunda Britannos,

De conducendo loquitur jam rhetore Thule.

Juvenal, Sat. xv. ver. 111, 112.

4. from

from the successful attempt made by Agricola, to humanize the people of his province, we may justly conclude, that knowledge, philosophy, and consequently a spirit of inquiry, began to prevail in the Roman part of Britain in a very early period.

WE learn from Eusebius and others, that Polycarp, the famous bishop of Smyrna, mentioned above, had been St. John's disciple. He had adopted the system of the Quartodecimans; nor could the authority of a Pope alienate him from that party. No man, after the expiration of the apostolic age, was more zealous than this excellent prelate in propagating the Christian faith. He sealed this belief with his blood; and the only crime of which persecutors impeached him, was his steady attachment to the interest of Christianity, and the important services he had done it. It was for that reason his murderers called him the Father of Atheism, the Father of Christians, and the Teacher of Asia. But his pastoral care was not confined to that division of the world. His zeal carried him much farther. He sent missionaries into the very heart of Gaul, and founded the church of Lyons. Nicetius and Bothinus, the first teachers there, had been his disciples*. And what shall hinder us from thinking that this truly apostolical man, and great lover of mankind, may have contributed every thing in his power to make Britain a province of the Christian empire?

* See Basnage—Hist. de l'Eglise, liv. v. chap. 3.

THIS, I confess, is no more than supposition and conjecture ; but the darkness of the subject admits of no certainty : and when it is considered that the most ancient British Christians of whom we have any tolerably just accounts, adopted Polycarp's system with regard to Easter, that like him they refused to conform to the custom of the Western church, and that, in their disputes with Italian missionaries, they always appealed to the authority of St. John, and the other Eastern divines, the conjecture is, at least, specious. Polycarp, who to all appearance has the best right to be called the founder of the British churches, suffered death in the 170th year of the vulgar æra. It is not probable that the gospel had taken any deep root in Britain before that time ; and if the testimony of Tertullian can at all be depended upon, it begun to flourish greatly in this island soon after that period.

DISSERTATION XXI.

Of the Conversion of the Southern Picts by St. Ninian. Of the Mission of Palladius to the Scots. Of St. Columba.

THE only guides we have to lead us through those dark regions of ecclesiastical antiquity, which are now to fall in our way, are, Adamnan, abbot of Iona; and Bede, the presbyter of Girwy. Any impartial person who peruses the life of Columba written by Adamnan, and the history of the Saxon churches compiled by the Anglo-Saxon, must be of opinion that these two writers possessed a much greater degree of zeal, piety, and learning, than of sound judgment. I do not wish to be understood, from this observation, that I put Adamnan on any footing of equality with Bede.

AFTER Bede had told that Columba came from Ireland in the year of Christ 565, with a resolution of preaching the word of God to the Northern Picts*, he observes that those in the South had long before that time

* Bede lib. iii. cap. 4.

abandoned the errors of idolatry. The happy instrument by which these Southern Picts had been converted to the faith was Ninian, a saint and bishop, who, to use Bede's language, had been regularly formed at Rome. It is said further, that this worthy prelate built a church, which he took care to dedicate to St. Martin. That church stood in a place which was called *Candida Casa*, and the reason why the place obtained that name, was, that it was built of stone, a species of architecture which the Britons had never known till introduced by Ninian.

BEDE has not mentioned the pontificate during which Ninian had been instructed at Rome, nor has he ascertained the time of his preaching among the Picts. Modern writers have supplied that defect. Smith, the latest editor of that author's ecclesiastical history, relates *, that the founder of *Candida Casa* visited that see in the time of Pope Damasus, about the year 370, that he was ordained a bishop for the propagation of Christianity among his countrymen, by Siricius, in the year 394; and that in his way to Britain he took the opportunity of waiting on the celebrated St. Martin, in Gaul.

INNES with great acuteness has found out the Pictish King in whose reign Ninian acted the part of an evangelist among the heathens of Pictavia †: the name of that monarch was Druist, the son of *Irb*, whose reign commenced in the year 406.

* Smith, in a note on the chapter of Bede now referred to.

† Innes, Crit. Essay, p. 136.

ON proper examination it will appear, that the story of Ninian's spiritual legation to the Southern Picts, and of his having dedicated a magnificent church to St. Martin, is attended with too many improbabilities not to seem at least dubious. His having been regularly instructed in the faith of Rome, though a British Christian, is a circumstance that renders it still more suspicious. If Ninian preached the doctrine he had learned at Rome, with regard to Easter, he made few profelytes, and left no orthodox disciples among his countrymen; for when Augustine, the monk, was sent into Britain by Pope Gregory, all the Christians there were quartodeciman schismatics or heretics. All that we know further, with regard to the history of this religious man, is, that he died much about the time in which Palladius was sent by Celestine, bishop of Rome, to exercise the episcopal office among the Scots.

PALLADIUS is said to have been the first bishop who was sent among the believing Scots; and the æra of his mission is assigned to the year 430 ‡. The Irish claim the honour of being those Scots to whom this great reformer was sent; but there was no considerable number of Christians in Ireland before St. Patrick appeared in quality of apostle there: so that their title to the character of believing Scots cannot be well founded.

‡ Anno CCCCXXX, Palladius ad Scotos in Christum credentes a Celestino papa primus mittitur episcopus.

THE British Scots, from the earliest accounts of time, have been possessed with a belief that Palladius was employed in their country; and it is universally agreed, that he died in North Britain. It appears likewise that Pope Celestine departed this life in the year 432 *; so that if Palladius had been but one year employed among the Irish Scots, as they themselves relate, it is absolutely improbable that the Pope could have received the news of his great want of success before the time of his own death, in order to ordain St. Patrick to succeed him in his office.

OF all the Scottish saints who have been celebrated by panegyrics, canonized by priestcraft, and adored by superstition, Columba was undoubtedly the most illustrious. It is generally agreed that Columba was an Irishman, and descended of ancestors who had made a considerable figure in that island. Adamnan has told us, that his father, Fedlimid, and his mother, Orthnea, were ranked among the nobility †. Keating quotes the rhimes of an old Hibernian bard, from which we learn that Fergus, his grandfather, was a Prince renowned in war ‡. Some have confounded that Prince with Fergus MacErc, the supposed founder of the Scottish monarchy: but the Irish manuscripts to which Usher § appeals, inform us, that the Fergus from whom Columba derived his descent, was the son of

* Usher's Ant. p. 424.

† Sanctus Columba ex nobilibus fuit oriundus genitalibus patrem habuit Feidlimyd, filium Fergus, matrem Orthneam nomine.

‡ Gen. Hist. of Ireland, part ii. p. 32.

§ Ant. p. 360.

that celebrated hero, *Conal Gulbin*, and the grandson of that famous Hibernian monarch, Neil of the nine hostages.

Mr. O Connor asserts, that Columba rejected the imperial crown of Ireland. We know, indeed, that some Princes have preferred the monkish cowl to the regal diadem. We read of several Kings who abdicated their thrones and received the tonsure. England has furnished us with two of that character, and Scotland with a third: but we cannot readily believe that Columba either had a crown in his offer, or had the same extreme contempt for the highest pitch of human grandeur.

MANY different Irish writers relate that Columba was dedicated very early to the study and service of Divinity: and nothing is more probable than that he mortified his appetites by a severe course of abstinence. Austerities of every kind, and macerations particularly were the cardinal virtues of those superstitious ages. Our saint is said to have overacted the part of a religious self-tormentor to such a degree that his body was emaciated away into a hideous skeleton. This story however cannot be reconciled to probability. Columba underwent many fatigues, and some give accounts of his extraordinary vigour and healthiness of constitution. An old Bard quoted by Keating, assures us * that while Columba was celebrating the mysteries, or singing psalms, his voice might be heard

* Keating, book ii. p. 35.

at the distance of a mile and a half, which is a kind of proof that he was not so ill fed as is generally supposed.

It is universally agreed that this saint employed the greatest part of his life in cultivating the devout faculties of the soul. He certainly was possessed with the most ardent and unconfined zeal for religion. His unwearied and successful labours in propagating the gospel among the Irish, Scots, Picts, and Britons, afford a convincing proof of the enthusiasm, if not of the sincerity of his mind.

THEY who commonly pass under the amiable name of good natured men, are seldom found qualified for the execution of arduous undertakings. That pertinacity which is necessary to compleat difficult designs, is often the fruit of an irascible and choleric disposition of the mind. Hence it may be inferred that Columba's passions were keen and violent, though perhaps not so peculiarly vindictive and hot, as bards and annalists have represented.

KEATING relates, on the faith of Irish manuscripts, that Columba, to gratify his private revenge, frequently embroiled the whole kingdom of Ireland. His rage produced three long civil wars, so often and so successfully did the irascible saint blow the trumpet of sedition. If it be true that the first of these wars was occasioned by the resentment of Columba, for losing a copy of the New Testament, which he claimed, and which the Irish monarch adjudged to another saint,

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the old tutelar demi-god of our country was certainly a most unreasonable man.

THE second war was founded on some kind of affront which Columba had received from a provincial King; and the third was carried on at his instigation, without any tolerable pretext at all. If these stories are authentic, the heathen may indeed ask, *can such violent transports of passion dwell in celestial minds* *? But it cannot well be supposed that any considerable number of the Irish, however monk ridden, would have fought battles in compliance with the humour of a man so impotently wrathful: much less can we believe that heaven interposed, on all these different occasions, in his favour. Yet those very authors on whose testimony the truth of the whole story rests, will have it that compleat victories were granted by the *God of Battles* to Columba, in consequence of his prayers. Columba is said to have been at last made sensible of his guilt by a holy person called *Molaise*. This man of God obliged the sinner to abandon his native country, by way of penance. He enjoined him likewise, under the highest penalties, never more to cast his eyes on Irish ground. The self-condemned criminal obeyed the spiritual father with a filial submission; and so religiously obsequious was he to the disciplinarian's commands, that he covered his eyes with a veil while he staid in the island. Keating supports this tale with the authority of a canonized bard.

* *Tantæne animis celestibus iræ.* VIRG. *Æn.* ii. v. 11.

BEDE gives the following relation of the saint's arrival in Britain, and of his ministry among the Picts. "In the year of Christ five hundred and sixty five, while Justin the Lesser held the reins of the Roman empire, Columba, a presbyter and abbot, whom his manners have rendered deservedly famous, came from Ireland into Britain. His design in coming thither, was to preach the word of God in the provinces of the Northern Picts, the Southern people of that denomination having been converted to the faith by Ninian, a long time before that period. He arrived in Britain while Bradius, a very powerful Prince, reigned over the Picts; and the power of the holy man's doctrine, and the influence of his example, converted that nation to the faith*.

ADAMNAN calls this Pictish King Bradeus, and informs us, that he ordered the gates of his palace to be shut against the apostle. But Columba, if we take Adamnan's word for it, removed this obstruction without any difficulty. The sign of the cross, and some other efficacious ceremonies, made the passage soon open to the saint. The King, upon seeing this miracle, received him courteously, and heard his advices with a respectful attention. It is true, some of his favourites conspired with the ministers of the old superstition in opposing the new teachers; but the man of God, says the writer of his life, overcame all opposition: and by the help of some signal miracles,

* Bed. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. cap. 4.

which

which gave an irresistible sanction to his doctrine, finished at last the great work he had undertaken.

Soon after Columba's arrival in Britain, he settled at Iona, and founded the celebrated abbey of that place.

BEFORE Columba had fixed the seat of his little spiritual empire at Iona, his character had risen to a great height. The sanctity of his manners, the mighty power of his eloquence, the spirit of that doctrine which he preached, the warmth and activity of his zeal, together with the benevolence of his intentions, had recommended him strongly to the highest attention and respect.

SHOULD one collect all the miracles and strange tales that legends have vouched and tradition transmitted from age to age, with regard to this remarkable person, he might very easily compile a huge volume. But a judicious reader would think himself little indebted to the compiler's industry.

ONE of these traditional fictions, though somewhat impious, is ludicrous. Oran, from whom the Cæmiterý in the island of Iona was called *Rælic-Oran*, was a fellow soldier of Columba in the warfare of the gospel. Columba, understanding in a supernatural way, that the sacred buildings he was about to erect in Iona, could never answer his purpose, unless some person of consequence undertook voluntarily to be buried alive in
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the ground which was marked out for those structures: Oran with great spirit undertook this dreadful task. He was interred accordingly. At the end of three days the grave was opened before a number of spectators. No sooner was the brave martyr's face uncovered, than he opened his mouth and cried aloud in the Galic language, *Death is no great affair, hell is a mere joke.* Columba, who assisted at the ceremony, was greatly shocked at the dangerous heterodoxy of this doctrine, and with great presence of mind cried out, *Earth on the head of Oran, and prevent his prattling.* Thus poor Oran was actually buried, for pretending to disclose the secrets of the other world.

OUR historians are generally agreed that whole kingdoms paid Columba the utmost deference, and were determined by his advice in matters of high consequence. He became a counsellor of state to many different sovereigns, and frequently decided the controversies of contending powers. Aidan, King of Scots, upon receiving some provocation from Brudius, the Pictish King, declared war against him. The armies of the two monarchs met near Dunkeld, and fought a battle which produced a great effusion of Christian blood. After the action was over, Columba came to the field and interposed his good offices, but all in vain. Aidan remained inflexible. The saint, fired with a pious indignation, reproved the Scottish King very sharply, and turned his back on him with great wrath. Aidan, sensible of his error, caught the garment of the retiring saint, and acknowledging his rashness,

rashness, begged to know of him how the injury done could be expiated. Columba replied hastily, that the loss sustained was irreparable. This drew tears from the penitent monarch. Columba was softened, wept bitterly, and after he had been silent for some time, advised Aidan to a peace. The King complied, Brudius acquiesced in the proposals made, and a pacification immediately ensued.

IN Columba's time, the hereditary, indefeasible right of Kings was a doctrine hardly known in any part of Britain or Ireland. In Scotland, the succession of the lineal heir seldom took place, till Kenneth the Third found means to establish it by law. Columba was a person of the greatest influence in those disputes which generally ensued on the throne's becoming vacant. This will appear from the following story.

GABHRAN, King of Scots, had left two sons, Aidan and Iogenanus. Columba had conceived a peculiar affection for the latter, and though the younger brother, inclined strongly to procure the crown for him. But a very strange adventure disconcerted his intention. Adamnan relates it thus. "While the holy man was in the island Kimbria*, he fell on a certain night into a supernatural dream, and saw an angel of the Lord holding in his hand a transparent book which contained directions for the ordination of Kings†. The angel presented the book to him; upon perusing

* Cimbri.

† Vitreus ordinationis regum liber.

it, he found himself commanded to ordain Aidan King. But his attachment to the younger brother made him decline the office. Upon this the angel stretched forth his hand and gave him a stroke on the cheek, which made an impression that remained perfectly visible during his life. Columba was then ordered in a very threatening manner, and under the penalty of a much heavier punishment, to comply immediately with the pleasure of Almighty God. He had the same vision, saw the same book, and received the same orders, three nights successively. At last the obstinate saint obeyed, and went to the island of Iona, where he found Aidan, and laying his hand on his head, he ordained him King*." It may be inferred from this marvellous story, that Columba was a person of great sway in state as well as religious affairs; and that he was artful enough to make the proper use of the influence his sanctity gave him among a superstitious people.

He was frequently consulted in the perplexities of government not only at home but abroad. His authority had particular weight in his native country. *Aodb* or Hugh, one of the Irish monarchs, summoned his Princes, nobility, and dignified ecclesiastics, to meet in parliament at *Dromceat*. The principal reason which induced him to call this great council proceeded from a very curious cause.

* *Adamn. Vita Colum. l'j. iii. cap. 5.*

THE Irish nation had been for some time most grievously oppressed by a numerous rabble of Bards, a race of men, idle, avaricious, and insupportably petulant. One of the many ample privileges which these formidable satyrists had acquired, was, an indisputable right to any boon they were pleased to ask. This high prerogative joined to the advantage of a sacred character, made the Bards so intolerably audacious, that in King *Aodh's* time, they had the insolence to demand the most valuable jewel belonging to the crown. The jewel these miscreants fought, was the golden bodkin which fastened their sovereign's royal robes under his neck. An outrage so provoking incensed Hugh or Aodh to such a degree, that he formed a design of expelling the whole order out of the island: but as the authority of Irish Kings was circumscribed within narrow bounds, he was under the necessity of calling the representatives of the nation together, and of having Columba's assent before his will could have the force of a law.

COLUMBA, at the earnest request of the King and the Irish nation, repaired to Dromceat. His retinue consisted of twenty bishops, forty priests, fifty deacons, thirty students in divinity, and if we believe Keating, he was accompanied by Aidan, King of Scotland. The saint was received by the assembly with singular respect: but some of the Scottish clergy, by whom he was accompanied, were treated with contempt and insolence. Columba had ample revenge of those who insulted his clergy, and we are firmly assured that the

hand of God was visible in the punishment inflicted on the offenders. Struck by a judgment so signal, the King accommodated the affair of the Bards according to Columba's pleasure.

THERE is no necessity for entering into any detail of the particulars of this saint's life, as they are related at large, though incorrectly, by his biographer. Upon the whole, we may allow that Columba, notwithstanding of his faults, was a man of respectable talents, and could use well the ascendancy which his religious reputation gave him over a superstitious age.

THE boundless influence he had over two successive Princes who filled the throne of Scotland; the friendship he had contracted with King Rodoric of Cumberland; the ascendant he had over the great Pictish Monarch and his whole subjects, together with the share he took occasionally in the administration of public affairs in Ireland, seem to furnish convincing proofs of his genius, spirit and address. He was born a man of high quality, and closely allied to Princes, but preferred the apparent humility of a religious life to the highest secular honours. Whether this austerity was the effect of a desire of power, under a sanctity of character, or from real enthusiasm, is now difficult to say, though very possibly it arose from both.

MANY learned authors have told us positively, that Columba wore the episcopal mitre; but he was no

more than a Presbyter. Had he been fond of a superior rank in the hierarchy, he might have very easily gratified his ambition: but though he was confined within the more narrow limits of the priestly office, his authority extended much farther than that of the most exalted dignitaries of his time.

COLUMBA is said to have been a poet and historian. That he possessed a talent for rhyme, and exercised it frequently, is very agreeable to the reported strength and vivacity of his imagination, the prevailing humour of the time, and that friendly partiality which the Scottish and Irish bards have entertained for his memory.

WE are informed by Mr. Lhoyd *, that there is still in the Bodleian library at Oxford an Irish manuscript, intituled, The works of Columbcille, in verse, containing some account of the author's life, together with his prophecies and exhortations to Princes.

THE same industrious writer observes, that there is in the library of Trinity College at Dublin some other most curious and wonderfully ancient manuscript, containing the four gospels, and a variety of other matters. The manuscript is called, The Book of Columb-cille, and thought to have been written by Columba's own hand.—*Flann*, King of Ireland, ordered a very costly cover to be given this book. On a silver cross, which makes a part of that cover, is

* Catalog. of Irish Manuscripts.

still to be seen an Irish inscription, of which the literal meaning is, The prayer and blessing of Columb-cille to *Flann*, the son of *Mailsheachnail*, King of Ireland, who made this cover: and should the manuscript be of no greater antiquity than the reign of that Prince, it must be about nine hundred years old †. This story, however, carries with it a great degree of improbability—and it is more than probable that *this book of Columb-cille* arose from the pious fraud of a much later age.

† Lhoyd's Archæol. p. 432.

THE END.

ERRATA.

In the first dissertation, instead of *Turdetonians*, read *Turdetanians* throughout. Page 34. l. 16. Instead of *upon the death of Chlorus*, read *upon the death of Constantine the Great*. Page 64. l. 4. Instead of *fertile of tyrants*, read *in*. Page 330. l. 20. for *corps*, read *body*.

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